



UNIVERSITY  
OF PITTSBURGH

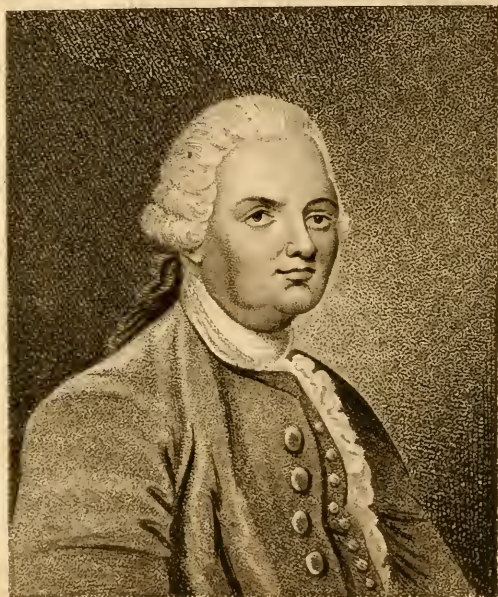


Dar Rm  
DT377  
B887  
1812

LIBRARY



Travels



JAMES BRUCE, ESQ.

TRAVELS

IN

ABYSSINIA

BY

James Bruce, Esq.



SACRIFICING AT THE SOURCE OF THE NILE.

PUBLISHED BY J. JOHNSON,  
ST. PAULS CHURCH-YARD.



# TRAVELS,

*Between the Years 1765 and 1773,*

THROUGH PART OF

AFRICA, SYRIA, EGYPT, AND ARABIA,

INTO

## ABYSSINIA,

TO DISCOVER THE SOURCE OF THE NILE :

Comprehending

AN INTERESTING NARRATIVE OF

### THE AUTHOR'S ADVENTURES

IN

## ABYSSINIA,

AND A CIRCUMSTANTIAL ACCOUNT OF THE

MANNERS, CUSTOMS, GOVERNMENT, RELIGION, HISTORY, &c. &c.  
OF THAT COUNTRY.

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ORIGINAL WORK.

---

BY THE LATE

*JAMES BRUCE, ESQ.*

---



ALBION PRESS :

PUBLISHED BY J. AND J. CUNDEE, IVY-LANE,

PATERNOSTER-ROW, LONDON.

# TRAVELS

OF

THE

Digitized by the Internet Archive

in 2009 with funding from

University of Pittsburgh Library System





*AMONG all the expeditions undertaken by modern adventurers, either for the extension of knowledge, the promotion of commerce, or the gratification of private curiosity, none ever excited more general interest than that of Mr. Bruce. Urged by an irresistible impulse, by a laudable ambition to accomplish a design which had for ages baffled the efforts of mankind, he pursued with unshaken perseverance the end which he had proposed; and his success was equal to his most sanguine expectations. Though the discovery of the source of the far-famed Nile had ever been a favorite object with men distinguished for science, talents, and enterprize, yet the fountains, which gave birth to its fertilizing current, were destined to remain enveloped in profound obscurity, till the daring genius of Bruce explored, and laid them open to the rest of the world. In the prosecution of this darling scheme, which occupied a period of several years, he had to struggle with a variety of difficulties and dangers; he was involved in many extraordinary adventures, and enjoyed an opportunity of witnessing*

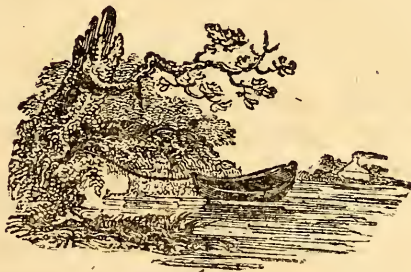
*the most singular, and before unheard-of manners, habits, and customs; these subjects blended with the usual information which his work conveys, alternately excite sympathy and horror, astonishment, indignation, and delight; and diffuse throughout his narrative a charm which must ever secure it deserved popularity.*

*At the present moment the details furnished by Mr. Bruce respecting the various nations composing the vast empire of Abyssinia, cannot fail to acquire new value and interest from the recent visit of Lord Valentia, and the subsequent mission of Mr. Salt, for the purpose of attempting to open a friendly communication with the government of that country; circumstances which may perhaps eventually lead to a commercial intercourse with a large portion of the African continent, and create a new market for the accumulated produce of some of our manufactures.*

*It is the lot of few who by their virtues and their talents attract the notice of their contemporaries, or escape the shafts of envy, ignorance, and malevolence. Of this truth, Mr. Bruce afforded an additional example. Enemies and detractors were not wanting, who labored by means of every possible insinuation to throw a veil of suspicion over the veracity of his accounts, and even succeeded in depreciating him and his work, for a time, in the public estimation. The concurring testimony of subsequent travellers proved, however, a complete vindication of Bruce's integrity, and effectually refuted the aspersions of ignorance and incredulity.*

*For some time before the sudden decease of the author, he was engaged in preparing for the press a*  
*new*

*new edition of his Travels, but its publication was delayed by various causes, till the year 1805, when it appeared in seven octavo volumes, with all the corrections and improvements made by Mr. Bruce himself, and considerable additions by the editor. From this improved edition the abridgement here submitted to the public has been executed. Desirous of combining embellishment with utility, the proprietors have selected a bold handsome type and annexed a serie of graphic illustrations, designed and engraved expressly for their work. An authentic Memoir of Mr. Bruce's Life is prefixed, and with these recommendations they confidently claim for this faithful epitome the attention of all whose leisure or whose means are not suited to the purchase of the voluminous original.*



The first of these is the fact that the  
 population of the country has increased  
 rapidly since the year 1850. This is  
 due to a number of causes, the most  
 important of which are the discovery  
 of gold in California, the discovery  
 of gold in Colorado, and the  
 discovery of gold in Nevada. These  
 discoveries have attracted a large  
 number of people to the West, and  
 have caused a rapid increase in the  
 population of the country. This  
 increase in population has caused a  
 rapid increase in the demand for  
 land, and has caused a rapid  
 increase in the price of land. This  
 increase in the price of land has  
 caused a rapid increase in the  
 demand for labor, and has caused  
 a rapid increase in the price of  
 labor. This increase in the price  
 of labor has caused a rapid  
 increase in the demand for capital,



# MEMOIRS

OF

## THE LIFE OF JAMES BRUCE, ESQ.

---

**T**HE family of the Bruces of Kinnaird is of great antiquity, being descended from a younger son of the famous Robert Bruce, and having been in possession of that estate upwards of three centuries, during which it has formed alliances with some of the most distinguished houses in the kingdom.

James Bruce, of whose extraordinary travels an epitome is given in this volume, was born at Kinnaird House, the family mansion, in the county of Stirling in Scotland, December 14, 1730. He was the younger of the two children of David Bruce, Esq. by his first wife, Marion, daughter of James Graham, Esq. of Airth, dean of the faculty of advocates, and judge of the high court of admiralty, in Scotland. This lady was prematurely consigned to the grave by a lingering disease in 1733, so that it was not the fortune of her son to know the tenderness of a mother. His father soon afterwards contracted a second marriage by which he had a numerous issue.

When James had arrived at his eighth year, his father resolved to bestow on him an education suitable for the heir-apparent to his fortune, and for this purpose sent him to London, entrusting him to the care of his brother-in-law, Counsellor Hamilton. For about a year he resided in the house of that gentleman, and was afterwards placed in the school of a Mr. Graham, whence in 1742 he was removed  
to

to the public seminary at Harrow. Here he remained four years, during which he acquired a knowledge of the ancient languages, and acquaintance of several persons of abilities and distinction, whose friendship he retained through life. Being left to the choice of a profession he at first entertained thoughts of the church, but at length having decided on qualifying himself as an advocate for the Scottish bar, he returned to his native country, in 1747.

In the same year Mr. Bruce entered his son at the University of Edinburgh. What proficiency was made by the latter in the different branches of legal knowledge is not known; but there is reason to believe that he felt the task which he had undertaken neither agreeable nor instructive. In 1748 his studies were interrupted by the delicate state of his health, which obliged him to remove into the country; and this with other circumstances determined him to renounce for ever the profession of the law. His ardent imagination was not long afterwards attracted by the flattering prospects presented by India; but being considerably above the age at which persons are enrolled as writers in the service of the East India Company, his friends advised him to petition the directors for the liberty of settling as a free trader under their patronage. In July, 1753, he repaired to London with a view to prosecute his design.

Amongst other new acquaintance to whom he was introduced in the metropolis was the family of Mrs. Allan, the widow of an eminent wine-merchant, for whose daughter Mr. Bruce conceived an attachment which induced him to abandon his hopes of Asiatic wealth. His addresses were favourably received; in February, 1754, he obtained the hand of Miss Allan, and with it a share of the business belonging to the family into which he was admitted. His connubial happiness was of very short duration. In a few months after marriage, Mrs. Bruce manifested evident symptoms of a consumption, which in October of the same year carried her off at Paris, on her way to the south of France.

This

This circumstance gave a new direction to the views and pursuits of Mr. Bruce. His attention to business relaxed; and he applied himself to the study of languages with such assiduity as gave him a habit of acquiring the most difficult idioms and dialects, of which he afterwards availed himself in learning the languages in the east. He also improved himself in drawing, and endeavoured to obtain a correct taste in regard to paintings and works of art in general. In these pursuits he was chiefly engaged till 1757, when he visited Portugal and Spain, with the professed object of being present at the vintage of that season, but in reality to view the state of society, art, and science, in those countries. Landing at Corunna, in Galicia, he thence proceeded to Ferrol, Oporto, and Lisbon\*. Having seen every thing remarkable in Portugal, Mr. Bruce traversed Spain, visited Madrid, and entering France by way of Bayonne, proceeded

---

\* The journal which Mr. Bruce kept of this tour, which has never been made public, is filled with shrewd remarks and amusing observations, of which the following passage may serve as a specimen.

“There are many particular customs in Portugal, all of which may be known by this rule, that whatever is done in the rest of the world in one way, is done in Portugal by the contrary, even to the rocking of the cradle, which, I believe, in all the rest of the world is from the side to side, but in Portugal from head to foot. I fancy it is owing to this early contrariety that their brains work so different a manner all their lives after. A Portuguese boatman always rows standing, not with his face but his back to the stern of the boats, and pushes his oar from him. When he lands you, he turns the stern of the boat to the shore, and not the head. If a man and woman ride on the same mule the woman sits before the man with her face the contrary way to what they do in England. When you take leave of any person to whom you have been paying a visit, the master of the house always goes out of the room, down stairs, and out of the house before you, to leave you as he says in possession of his house, and to shew you how much he and all that are in it are devoted to you. They are indeed very attentive to the smallest punctilio, knowing well one another's temper. The smallest affront is never forgiven. This is the occasion of the many murders which are continually committed here. It is indeed the only country where it can be said that murder is tolerated. Every family has a son, a brother or a nephew, who is a priest or friar. These are the instruments. As soon as the friar has committed the crime, he flies to his convent; and in six months the thing is no more talked of.”

to Bourdeaux. Leaving that city he continued his journey through Perigord, the Limosin, and part of Alsace; and on quitting the French territory at Strasburg he followed the course of the Rhine, visited Frankfort, Bonn, and Cologne, and then turned off to Brussels. Here a circumstance occurred which had nearly been attended with disagreeable consequences. On the second day after his arrival he was involved in a quarrel with a person who had behaved rudely in his presence to a young gentleman, a stranger to Mr. Bruce, but whose appearance had inclined him to interfere in his defence. The aggressor sent him a challenge, which he accepted. They met, and our traveller twice wounded his antagonist, and as he at first apprehended, mortally. As the event was doubtful, and could not be ascertained on the spot, he thought it prudent to quit Brussels with all possible expedition, and repaired to Rotterdam, where he intended to embark for England: but receiving intelligence from his friends in Brabant that his alarm was unfounded and that his antagonist was recovering, he returned to the Netherlands. He thence proceeded with several of his friends to view the theatre of war in the north of Germany, where he arrived just in time to witness the victory gained by Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick over the French, at Crevelt. Returning to Rotterdam he there received intelligence of the decease of his father at Edinburgh, in May 1758, on which he immediately sailed for England.

Though Mr. Bruce by this event succeeded to the paternal estate, he still retained his share in the wine business; nor was it till three years afterwards that the partnership was dissolved. Meanwhile he diligently prosecuted his studies. With the aid of works collected in Holland he acquired a knowledge of the Arabic, and the same restless curiosity directed his attention to the Ethiopic or Geez, a circumstance which perhaps influenced his determination to explore the source of the Nile.



In 1761 he withdrew from the wine business, which he had carried on for seven years in company with his brother-in-law, Mr. Allan. The events of the subsequent years of his life, his acceptance of the British consulship at Algiers, his travels in Africa and Asia, his accomplishment of that enterprize which he had made the object of his ambition, his residence in Abyssinia and return to Europe, form the subject of the following sheets.

Landing at Marseilles on his return from the east, he first spent some time in France, whither his fame had preceded him, and where his reception was highly flattering. His health having suffered much by the fatigues which he had undergone in his travels, he next determined to visit Italy, and repaired thither in July 1772. After a residence of some length at Bologna and Rome, he returned in spring 1774, to Paris, and in June continued his journey to England, which he reached after an absence of twelve years. Soon after his arrival he was introduced at court, and graciously received by his Majesty, who was pleased to honor Mr. Bruce's labors in the cause of discovery with his approbation, and to accept the drawings of Baalbec, Palmyra, and the African cities.

It was now expected that he would lose no time in giving to the world a narrative of his travels, in which the public curiosity could not but be deeply interested; but various circumstances conspired to delay the publication. This delay afforded an opportunity to persons envious of his fame, ignorant of his merits, or offended at the little deference which he paid to their learning, to depreciate his character, and to propagate reports injurious to his reputation. The circumstances and adventures with which he amused his friends were by many deemed incredible because they were extraordinary; whilst his enemies, not content with questioning his veracity in particular instances, asserted that he had never been in Abyssinia; and this palpable falsehood was afterward believed on the authority of Mr. Wortley Montagu and Baron de Tott.

During his long absence from his native country, his friends having received no account of him, naturally gave him up for dead : but as his decease could not be proved, his property became abandoned, as it were, without an owner, to those whose original title extended no farther than temporary possession. This state of affairs involved him in a number of law-suits, which necessarily occupied much of his time, and with the other avocations totally prevented for a long time his application to literature.

Resolving to settle on his paternal estate, he rebuilt his house, to which he added a noble museum, where he deposited the valuable stores of oriental learning, his large collection of drawings and curious articles obtained during his far-extended peregrination. He also much improved his landed property, inclosing and cultivating the waste grounds. In 1776 Mr. Bruce married Mary, daughter of Thomas Dundas, of Fingas, Esq. who died in 1785, after a lingering indisposition, during which she was attended with the most affectionate assiduity by her husband. By this lady Mr. Bruce had three children ; Robert, the eldest, died when an infant, and the other two are the present Mr. Bruce of Kinnaird, and the wife of John Jardine, Esq.

Had it not been for this domestic calamity, it is doubtful whether Mr. Bruce would have ever seriously thought of giving to the public an account of his travels, as during a period of near twelve years he had made very little progress in transcribing or arranging his journals. This task he now undertook partly in compliance with the urgent entreaties of his friends, and partly in order to soothe his afflictions ; and in 1790 his long expected work made its appearance in five quarto volumes. Notwithstanding the doubts artfully circulated respecting the author's veracity on account of certain passages and assertions contained in this work, its character, like fine gold submitted to the fire, has but acquired fresh lustre by each succeeding examination.

After the publication of his travels, Mr. Bruce applied

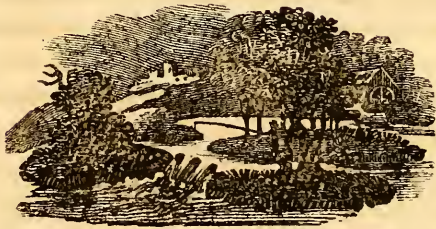
at intervals to study, and amused himself with comparing part of the Ethiopic translation of the Bible with the original languages. This collation he undertook at the request of persons not less eminent for their high rank in the church than for their learning and piety. Conformably with the advice of his friends, he was preparing for the press a second edition of his travels in octavo, when death suddenly prevented the execution of that plan. On the 26th of April 1794, having had company at his house, he was going down stairs, about eight o'clock in the evening to hand a lady to her carriage, when his foot slipped, and he fell headlong from about the sixth or seventh step from the ground. He was taken up insensible, with no marks of contusion, one of his hands only being a little hurt. Such, however, was the injury which he had received, that though medical assistance was immediately procured, he survived but a few hours, and expired early the next morning. On the 1st of May his remains were deposited in the church-yard of Larbert, in the tomb which he had there erected to the memory of his second wife and her child. Over the vault is a beautiful monumental structure of iron, cast at the neighbouring foundery of Carron (in which concern Mr. Bruce had a share) and adorned with emblematical figures and Greek inscriptions: perhaps the most ingenious work of the kind that was ever executed. On the north side is the inscription for Mrs. Bruce, and on the south side the following epitaph:

In this tomb are deposited the remains of  
 James Bruce, Esq. of Kinnaird,  
 Who died on the 27th of April, 1794,  
 In the 64th year of his age.  
 His life was spent in performing  
 useful and splendid actions;  
 He explored many distant regions,  
 He discovered the fountains of the Nile,  
 He traversed the deserts of Nubia.  
 He was an affectionate husband,  
 An indulgent parent,  
 An ardent lover of his country.  
 By the unanimous voice of mankind,  
 His name is enrolled with those,  
 Who were conspicuous  
 For genius, for valour, and for virtue.

It would perhaps have been impossible to have found a person better qualified by nature and art for the difficult hazardous enterprize which he undertook than Mr. Bruce. His stature was six feet four inches, his person well-proportioned, and his strength correspondent to his size. He excelled in all corporeal accomplishments, being a hardy, practised, and indefatigable swimmer, trained to fatigue and exercise of every kind; and his long residence among the Arabs had given him a more than ordinary facility in managing the horse. In the use of fire-arms, and also in handling the spear and lance on horseback, his dexterity was uncommonly great. In qualifications of a different kind he equalled, if not surpassed the generality of travellers. He possessed an excellent memory, and a vigorous and well cultivated understanding. He found but little difficulty in acquiring languages, and understood French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese, the two first of which he spoke and wrote with facility. Besides Greek and Latin, which he read well but not critically, he knew the Hebrew, Chaldee, and Syriac; and was perfect master of the Arabic, Ethiopic, and Amharic. During the greater part of his life he had applied to the study of astronomy and other branches of mathematical science. His abilities in drawing were great, and his taste in this particular excellent. He had also gained sufficient knowledge in physic and surgery to recommend him among the barbarous nations whom he visited.

If his temper was irritable and passionate, his heart was warm, his affections were ardent, and his moral feelings extremely acute. His friendships therefore were sincere, and, in general, permanent; but from his constitutional temper sometimes interrupted by suspicion. From the same reason his enmities were occasionally capricious, though in general well-founded. His love of ancestry, and the pleasure which he took in relating his own exploits, scarcely deserve notice as imperfections, though they were certainly prominent features in his character. With this propensity, however, he joined a fixed regard for honour, justice, and integrity.

His religious principles were found on the basis of the Scriptures; and while he detested fanaticism, his mind, accustomed to dangerous situations, from which Providence alone could deliver him, had contracted a slight and amiable tinge of superstition, sometimes an attendant on warm, unaffected piety, but never arising in understandings like his, from ordinary causes. Upon the whole, a survey of Mr. Bruce's character and merits cannot fail to lead to this conclusion that in personal accomplishments he was surpassed by few of his contemporaries; that he was uncommonly distinguished for vigour of understanding and literary attainments; and that in active persevering intrepidity, he may be classed with the most eminent persons of any age and country.



The first part of the book is devoted to a general history of the United States from its discovery by Columbus in 1492 to the present time. It covers the early years of settlement, the struggle for independence, and the formation of the Constitution. The second part of the book is devoted to a detailed history of the United States from 1789 to the present time. It covers the early years of the Republic, the expansion of the territory, and the Civil War. The third part of the book is devoted to a detailed history of the United States from 1865 to the present time. It covers the Reconstruction period, the Gilded Age, and the Progressive Era.

The fourth part of the book is devoted to a detailed history of the United States from 1900 to the present time. It covers the Progressive Era, the World War period, and the New Deal. The fifth part of the book is devoted to a detailed history of the United States from 1945 to the present time. It covers the Cold War period, the Vietnam War, and the present time.

The sixth part of the book is devoted to a detailed history of the United States from 1950 to the present time. It covers the Cold War period, the Vietnam War, and the present time. The seventh part of the book is devoted to a detailed history of the United States from 1960 to the present time. It covers the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights Movement, and the present time.

# TRAVELS

IN

# ABYSSINIA.

## CHAPTER I.

---

Mr. Bruce submits to the British government the plan of an expedition against Ferrol—Is appointed consul at Algiers—Misunderstanding with the Dey of Algiers respecting passes—The author applies himself to the study of medicine, surgery, and the modern Greek language—Voyage to Minorca and return along the African coast—Bona—Tabarca—Tunis—Dugga—Hydra—Welled Sidi Boogannim, a tribe of Arabs who live on lions' flesh—Tipasa—Constantina—Medrashem—Remarkable tribe inhabiting the mountains of Jibbel Aurez—Tez-zoute—Elegant remains of antiquity at Spaitla—Mughtar—Second visit to Spaitla—Remarkable spring at Feriana—Amphitheatre at Gemme—Caravan of pilgrims—Tripoli—Bengazi and distresses of its inhabitants—Shipwreck of Mr. Bruce and his narrow escape—He returns to Bengazi—Sails for Crete—Visits Rhodes, Cyprus, Sidon, Tripoli, and Aleppo—Journey to Palmyra and Baalbec.

---

**DURING** Mr. Bruce's journey through Spain and Portugal as mentioned in the account of his life, he had spent a few days at Ferrol in Galicia, a considerable harbour, where part of the Spanish navy used to be stationed. Accident brought him into the company of several persons in the service of Spain, from whom he procured much information respecting the town and dock-yards, and also a plan of the port and fortifications. A report was soon afterwards circulated that the court of Spain was about to commence hostilities against Britain, which was already engaged in a contest with France. Mr. Bruce on considering

---

Mr. Bruce plans an expedition against Ferrol.

---

the means of defence which Ferrol possessed, was convinced that an attack upon it by a British squadron would be crowned with success; and that in case of a war with Spain, that kingdom might be easily invaded from this point. About the end of 1760, as circumstances seemed to threaten a rupture between the two countries, he communicated his plan to his friend Mr. Wood, then under-secretary of state, adding that in case of a war with Spain, if the king would entrust him with the command of the Forlorn Hope and a pair of colours, he would undertake with one boats' crew to plant them on the beach at Ferrol.

As the British ministry had not arranged any plan of operations, the project of Mr. Bruce, though favorably received, was not adopted, and he repaired to Scotland where his private affairs required his presence. It was not long, however, before he was sent for by Mr. Wood, who informed him that Mr. Pitt, at that time prime minister, designed to prepare an expedition against Ferrol, and wished to have some conversation with him on the subject. He waited a considerable time for the promised conference, when he learned from Mr. Wood, that some person had offered to combine with his plan another, which, on farther information, he deemed dangerous and impracticable. It was proposed to invade France, and if possible to take Bourdeaux with the same army which should afterwards attack Ferrol, and then proceed to the relief of Portugal. Mr. Bruce, from his knowledge of the country round Bourdeaux, foresaw that an attempt upon that city would prove unsuccessful; and in a memorial to the minister he stated his sentiments on the subject with boldness and freedom. The subsequent retirement of Mr. Pitt from office did not put an end to Mr. Bruce's hopes of employment; and he had several interviews with the Earl of Egremont and Mr. Grenville who formed part of the succeeding administration, to concert an expedition against Ferrol. The execution of this  
plan



---

He accepts the post of Consul at Algiers.

---

plan was to be entrusted to Lord Howe with the troops destined for the assistance of Portugal ; but no sooner was the ambassador of that country apprized of the design to employ the troops in this attempt, than he obtained an audience of the king, and so forcibly represented the imminent danger of his ally, that ministers determined to relinquish the project.

Disappointed, after a long and expensive attendance in his offer of public service, Mr. Bruce resolved to return to his native country, and devote his whole attention to his private affairs. Lord Halifax, secretary of state for the southern department, hearing of his intention, requested to see him before he left London. At their interview this nobleman laughed at Mr. Bruce's intention of retiring into the country at his time of life, observing that the way to rise under the sovereign who had then recently ascended the throne, was by enterprize and discovery, and that his Majesty's love of the arts was a sure and effectually introduction to patronage. He remarked that Africa, though comparatively speaking at our own door, was yet unexplored ; that Dr. Shaw had mentioned magnificent remains of ancient architecture existing in the territories of Tunis and Algiers, and that it would be an undertaking worthy of his talents, to make drawings of these antiquities for the king's collection. As a farther inducement, his lordship stated that the post of British agent and consul-general at Algiers was just then vacant, and warmly advised Mr. Bruce to embrace this opportunity of visiting Africa under the protection of a public character ; promising that he should have permission to appoint a vice-consul for the dispatch of business in his absence, and that if he made wide excursions and large additions to the king's collection he should receive the rewards stipulated in the affair of Ferrol, or be promoted in the diplomatic department. To these proposals Mr. Bruce was induced to accede ; and in

---

The Author's arrival at Algiers;

---

the course of subsequent conversations with Lord Halifax and Mr. Wood, mention was frequently made of the sources of the Nile, and the obscurity in which they had ever been, and were still likely to be involved, until some undaunted adventurer should have the perseverance to trace that river to its origin. It was obliquely hinted that the accomplishment of an enterprize of such importance could not be expected of an ordinary traveller, and still less of one who had no experience of the difficulties that must attend it: and at the same time it was intimated that if any Briton should fulfil this desirable object he might confidently look forward, under such a monarch and in a period so auspicious to discovery and learning, to a proportionate reward.

The appointment to the consulship, owing to temporary circumstances, was not obtained till some months afterwards, in March 1762. Mr. Bruce now lost no time in furnishing himself with the necessary apparatus of instruments, and at the end of June set out through France for Italy. Here, as it had been agreed, he waited for orders from ministers to repair to his post, with this interval he employed in examining the most celebrated works of art, ancient as well as modern, with which that classic region then abounded. At length, in February 1763, he embarked at Leghorn, in the Montreal man of war, which carried him in safety to the place of his destination.

On his arrival at Algiers Mr. Bruce began diligently to discharge the duties of his office. He was already acquainted with the written Arabic, and now applied to the study of that language as spoken in Barbary; for, though the consul is always supplied with an interpreter, Mr. Bruce had resolved to make as little use as possible of his assistance. This object he accomplished by assiduous and frequent conversations with the natives in about a year's residence at Algiers. Finding that the enterprize which was the chief object of his coming to Africa would require

---

Misunderstanding with the Dey respecting passes.

---

quire a still greater variety of instruments than he possessed, and the co-operations of some assistants, he wrote to Italy, particularly for a small camera obscura, and for some young men acquainted with architecture and drawing; but one only, Luigi Balugani, a native of Florence, could be prevailed upon to engage in his service. His skill in drawing was very imperfect, but with Mr. Bruce's instruction, he so far improved as to be of great use to him.

When thus prepared, his journey into the interior of Africa was for some time retarded by a misunderstanding with the dey and government of Algiers respecting passports. The article in the treaty of peace and commerce between the British and Algerines, which defines the passport to be carried by English ships in those seas, uses the words "proper passes," by which the Algerines were accustomed to understand a printed paper issued by the Admiralty with a check like a bank note. A number of these passports fell into the hands of the French, when they took Minorca, in 1756, and were sold by them to the Spaniards and other enemies of the states of Barbary. In consequence of this accident the governors of Mahon, Gibraltar, and other British ports, furnished vessels with certificates, written on square pieces of common paper, sealed with the arms of the governor, and signed by him and his secretary. These certificates, called *passavants*, the corsairs could not read or distinguish, as they wanted the check, and carried the vessels which bore them into Algiers as good prizes. When Mr. Bruce claimed the ships, as was his duty, he was immediately summoned before the Dey and the divan. The former asked him upon his word as a Christian and an Englishman whether the word *passavant* was to be found in any of our treaties with the Barbary states. As equivocation was useless, Mr. Bruce admitted that these passes were not according to treaty, and stated the circumstances which had occasioned the adoption of this measure. On this the  
Dey,

---

Irritation of the ruling party at Algiers against Mr. Bruce.

---

Dey, holding several *passavants* in his hand, replied with great emotion in these remarkable words: "The British government know that we can neither read nor write, no, not even our own language. We are ignorant soldiers, and sailors: robbers if you please; though we have no wish to rob you: war is our trade and by that alone we live. Tell me how my cruisers are to know that all these different writings and seals are Governor Mostyn's, or Governor Johnston's, and not the Duke of Medina Sidonia's, or Barcelot's captain of the king of Spain's cruisers?" It was impossible to answer a question so simple and so direct; and orders were issued by the Dey to seize and confiscate every ship bearing a written passport. Mr. Bruce succeeded in warning the trade in the Mediterranean of their danger; but one ship which happened to come into the harbour, was immediately seized and broken to pieces, and her crew condemned to slavery.

In the same strain of violence the ruling party detained the surgeon to the consulship, whom Mr. Bruce had sent off with dispatches to the British government, and even proposed to compel his secretary by torture to disclose their contents. The refusal of the captain of an English frigate to carry a letter from the Dey to the King still farther exasperated the regency against Mr. Bruce, to whom they erroneously ascribed the conduct of that officer, and whom they could scarcely be restrained from treating ignominiously. It had been customary at Algiers, under similar circumstances, to make the consuls of the other European nations draw the stone cart, and bastinado their servants. From this disgrace Mr. Bruce was saved by the influence of the Aga Mahomet, the brother of the Dey, but was ordered to quit the country in three days under pain of death. He was about to embark when the great officers repaired in a body to the Dey, and represented the ruinous consequences of a war with England, which nothing

---

His studies preparatory to his intended travels in Africa.

---

could prevent if the consul were suffered to depart. Such was the impression produced by this remonstrance that the Dey requested Mr. Bruce to remain till the differences could be adjusted, promising that in the mean time he would behave to him like a father.

The independence of Mr. Bruce's conduct, and the abhorrence of every thing mean and unjust which he had invariably manifested, had gained him the enmity of a party at Algiers, which possessed considerable influence in England, and which had long been engaged in conveying to persons in power accounts injurious to his character. These had such an effect, that in May 1765, Mr. Bruce received intimation of the appointment of Captain Cleveland as ambassador to the Barbary States, and of Mr. Kirke to the consulship at Algiers. In the course of his official correspondence with Lord Halifax, Mr. Bruce had ventured to remind that minister of his promise to allow him a few months' absence for a journey into the interior of the country before he should resign his office. No notice, however, was taken of his solicitations, so that he was reduced to the necessity either of making his excursion as a private individual, or of relinquishing the principal object of his residence in Barbary.

During the disagreeable interval consumed in the altercation with the regency of Algiers, Mr. Bruce had spent much time in study, and in the acquisition of such knowledge as might be of service in his intended journey. From Mr. Ball, the king's surgeon at Algiers, he gained some general notions in medicine and surgery, and made himself acquainted with some of their most common operations; being aware that the character of a physician would recommend him more strongly than any other to the barbarous nations among which he was to travel. He had also availed himself of the lessons of a Greek priest, who taught him the pronunciation and accentuation of the Greek language. He asserts that the modern Greek  
spoken

---

Mr. Bruce visits Minorca—Bona—Tabarca.

---

spoken and written in the Archipelago differs not in purity from the language of Xenophon and Homer ; and that it is only because English scholars know not how to pronounce the ancient Greek that they conceive it to be different from the modern.

The Dey of Algiers though guided by the counsels of the party hostile to Mr. Bruce in his public conduct towards him, had long admired the firmness and integrity with which he served his country, and from the time of the remonstrance already mentioned a sort of friendly intercourse had subsisted between them. Finding himself neglected by his own government, Mr. Bruce obtained a private audience of the Dey, for the purpose of soliciting permission to travel through the inland provinces of Algiers ; and had the satisfaction to receive the most cordial promises of friendship and protection in his journey, and letters of recommendation to the governors of the places which he intended to visit. He was also furnished with letters of recommendation to the Beys of Tunis and Tripoli, states over which the circumstances of the times had given the Dey of Algiers considerable influence. Thus provided he set sail first for Port Mahon, and thence to Bona on the African coast.

Bona, the ancient Aphrodisium, stands on an extensive plain, a part of which appears to have been once overflowed by the sea. In plentiful years, the traders of Bona, by the permission of the government of Algiers; export considerable quantities of wheat. From Bona, proceeding along the coast, Mr. Bruce next passed the small island of Tabarca, formerly a fortification belonging to the Genoese, but now in the hands of the regency of Tunis.\* The island is

---

\* This island Mr. Bruce had proposed to Lord Halifax to obtain from the Bey of Tunis as a station for the British trade in the Mediterranean. The Bey was willing to grant it, and a description of the place was sent to the minister about the time when the disturbances occurred at Algiers.

---

Tobarca, Tunis.

---

famous for a coral fishery. On the opposite coast appear immense forests of oaks, which, if the quality of the wood be equal to the size and beauty of the tree, might supply timber for the navies of all the maritime powers in the Levant.—From Tabarca, our traveller sailed to Biserta, the *Hipo-zaritus* of antiquity, where he went on shore, and, out of respect to the memory of Cato, paid a visit to Utica. Of that celebrated city nothing but a heap of rubbish remains, but the trenches of the ancient besiegers are still very perfect.

Continuing his voyage along the coast, he next doubled Cape Carthage, and anchored before Goletta, now no longer that almost impregnable fortress which it was in the days of the Emperor Charles V. In the bay, between the Cape and Goletta, he saw several buildings and columns, remains of ancient Carthage, under water. Tunis, at the distance of twelve miles, is a large flourishing city; in a low, hot, and damp situation, indeed, and destitute of good water, but under a milder government, and inhabited by more civilized people, than Algiers.

Mr. Bruce having delivered his letters to the Bey of Tunis, received permission to traverse the country in any direction. One of the Bey's ladies furnished him with a two-wheeled covered cart, in which he secured his quadrant and telescope: the French consul recommended to him a renegado of that nation, named Osman; he hired ten spahis, or dragoons, excellent horsemen, and not less conspicuous as cowards; he had besides ten servants, two of them Irishmen, deserters from Spanish regiments in Oran:—and thus attended, he set out on his journey into the inland country, along the river Majerda, the *Bagrada* of antiquity.

Passing at Basil-bab, a triumphal arch in a bad taste, he arrived next day at Thugga or Dugga, a large scene of ruins: among the rest were the remains of one remarkable building, a large temple of

---



---

Dugga—Tribe of Lion eaters.

---



---

Parian marble, of the Corinthian order, the columns fluted, and the cornice highly ornamented in the very best style of sculpture; on the tympanum was represented an eagle bearing to heaven a human figure. From the inscriptions, and the circumstance of the temple having been erected by the Emperor Adrian; it seems most probable that the figures on the tympanum were intended to represent the apotheosis of Trajan his benefactor and predecessor. Mr. Bruce spent fifteen days in examining and making draughts of the architecture of this temple.

From Dugga Mr. Bruce proceeded to Keff, formerly Sicca Venerea; and thence to Hydra, the Thunodrunum of the ancients, on the frontiers between the kingdoms of Algiers and Tunis. Hydra is inhabited by a tribe of Arabs, called Welled Side Boogannim, “the sons of the father of flocks,” who are immensely rich, and pay no tribute to either Algiers or Tunis. These Arabs form a sort of religious or military order; and their chief is a saint. By their institutions they are obliged to eat lion’s flesh for their daily food. To procure this food, they need to be bold and expert hunters. The services which they perform to the neighbourhood, by destroying the lions with which it is infested, and their character for intrepid courage, have together gained them that exemption from tribute which they enjoy. Mr. Bruce had himself an opportunity of feasting on lion’s flesh, with the Welled Side Boogannim. Of a he lion the flesh was lean, tough, smelled strongly of musk, and tasted, as he imagines as the flesh of an old horse would taste. The flesh of a she lion was fatter, and somewhat less disagreeable: that of a whelp, six or seven months old, tasted worse than that of either the lioness or the old lion.\*

From

---

\* Dr. Shaw, observes Mr. Bruce, had before the publication of his travels very nearly ruined their credit by venturing to assert in conversation that these Welled Side Boogannim were lion-eaters. This



---

 Tipasa—Constantina—Medrashem.
 

---

From Hydra Mr. Bruce passed to the ancient Tipasa, an extensive scene of ruins. Draughts which he took of a large temple, and a four-faced triumphal arch of the Corinthian order among those ruins, are now in the king's collection.

Crossing the river Myskianah, he proceeded from Tipasa, through a beautiful and well cultivated country, into the eastern province of Algiers, now called Constantina. Its capital Constantina is the ancient Cirta: it stands on a high, gloomy, and tremendous precipice: part of the ancient aqueduct still remaining, now pours the water with which it once supplied the city, from the top of a cliff into a chasm four hundred feet below.

Mr. Bruce, after refreshing himself in the Bey's palace in Constantina, joined him in his camp, near Seteef, the Sitifi of antiquity; where he was with an army of twelve thousand men, and four pieces of cannon, making war with the Haneishah, the most powerful tribe of Arabs in that province.

Leaving the Bey, with letters of recommendation from that Prince, he proceeded next to Taggou-zaina, anciently Diana Veteranorum, as appears from an inscription of a triumphal arch still remaining there.

Medrashem, the burying place of the ancient kings of Numidia, was the next place that attracted his notice. He made a drawing of this superb pile of building, and then continued his journey south-east to Jibbel Aurez, the Mons Aurasius of the middle age, which is an assemblage of craggy cliffs.

In this tract of country our traveller was much surprised to find a tribe with red hair and blue eyes, who,

---

was considered at Oxford, the university where he had studied, as a traveller's license on the part of the doctor. The Oxonians thought it a subversion of the natural order of things that a man should eat a lion, when it has long been considered as almost the peculiar province of the lion to eat man. The doctor flinched under the severity of this criticism; he could not deny that the Welled Side Boogannim actually did eat lions as he had repeatedly stated; but he took care to omit the circumstance in his narrative and only hinted at it in his appendix.

---

 Remarkable Arab tribe—Lambesa.
 

---

though not fair like the English, were a shade lighter than the inhabitants of any country to the southward of Britain. They are a savage independent race; and though Mr. Bruce approached in safety, they are generally hostile to all around them. They are called Neardie. They have among the mountains huts of mud and straw; and may, perhaps, be a remnant of Vandals. They acknowledged their ancestors to have been Christians, and seemed proud of the circumstance. Each individual of this tribe has a Greek cross marked with antimony between the eyes.

In this neighbourhood is situated the Lambesa of Ptolemy, now called Tezoutei. It exhibits extensive ruins: seven of the city-gates are still standing, and large masses of walls of square masonry without lime: the other buildings are of different ages. A building, which seemed to have been intended for some military purpose, was supported by columns of the Corinthian order. Mr. Bruce conjectured from the size of its gates that it was a stable for elephants or a repository for a large military machine. Upon the key-stone of the arch of the principal gate is a bassao relievo of the standard of a legion, and upon it an inscription: *legio tertia Augusta*, which legion as we know from history was quartered at this place. Here is also a circular temple of a long disproportioned Doric, of the time of Aurelian.

At Cassareen, the ancient Colonia Scilitana, Mr. Bruce suffered both from hunger and fear. The country was rugged, barren, and thinly inhabited; the inhabitants were a rebellious tribe of Moors, who had renounced their allegiance, and declared for the rebel Haneishah.

He could not fulfil his intention of visiting Feriana, the Thala of the ancients, because the country was in a state of war. He therefore journeyed eastward to Spaitla, anciently Suffetula, still distinguished by many inscriptions, and very extensive and elegant remains of ancient architecture. He made draughts  
of

---

Spaitla, Gilma, Kisser, &c.

---

of three temples among those remains, two of the Corinthian, and one of the Composite order. The Welled Omran, a lawless tribe, disturbed our traveller, while studying the ruins of Spaitla. It was, he tells us pleasantly, a fair match between coward and coward. He was inclosed with his party by the high walls that form the square in which the temples stand. The plunderers durst not break in upon them, for fear of their fire-arms, and they durst not run away for fear of meeting with other troops of these banditti in the plain. When our traveller and his company were almost starved, they were happily relieved by the arrival of a friendly tribe.

At Gilma, he observed a large heap of rubbish and stones, but no distinct trace of any building. Muchtar, the ancient *Tucca Terebenthina*, was the next remarkable place which he visited; it is distinguished by two triumphal arches, the largest of which he considered equal in taste, execution, and mass, to any thing now existing in the world. The smaller is more simple but very elegant.

Kisser, the *Colonea Assuras* of the ancients, next attracted his notice. A triumphal arch, with an inscription, ascertaining the ancient name of the place, and a small square temple with several instruments of sacrifice carved upon it, are its most remarkable antiquities. It stands on the declivity of a hill, overlooking a fertile plain. At Musti, he observed the fragments of a triumphal arch scattered on the ground. Proceeding from Musti north east, he arrived again at Dugga, and went down the Bagrada to Tunis.

Mr. Bruce made another journey through the dominions of Tunis by Zowan a high mountain, on which is an aqueduct that once conveyed water to Carthage. In this journey he again visited Gilma and Spaitla, and spent five days more among the ruins of the latter. The town of Spaitla is not only valuable for its elegant remains of ancient architecture,

---

Warm springs at Feriana—Amphitheatre at El Gemme.

---

ture, but is situated in the most beautiful spot in Barbary, surrounded with juniper trees, and watered by a pleasant stream, which sinks there under ground, and appears no more. He next visited Feriana, the ancient Thala, which was taken and destroyed by Metellus in his pursuit in Jugurtha. Here he found nothing worthy of particular observation but baths of very warm water without the town. Warm as it was, a number of fishes, not unlike gudgeons, appeared in it. It was surprising that any fishes could exist in water of such a temperature: but there were about five or six dozen in the pool, and he was informed, that, in the day, they went down to a certain distance in the stream that ran from it, but returned at night into the warm and deep water of the pool.

He next visited successively Gafsa, Tozer, Gabs, and Inshilla, without being detained at any of these places by any very remarkable curiosity. At El Gemme, north-west of the last, he found a large and spacious amphitheatre. The lower part of that building appeared to have been formed to be occasionally filled with water, by means of a sluice and aqueduct still entire. For water-games, the water rose up in the middle through a large square hole, faced with hewn stone. This was the last ancient building which our traveller visited in the kingdom of Tunis, and he quitted it with the conviction that there is not in the territories of that State or Algiers one single fragment of good taste of which he had not taken a drawing.

He now retorted to Tunis, took leave of the Bey, and set out for Tripoli, travelling by the island of Gerba, the ancient island of the Lotophagi: but no bush, tree, or verdure, except some short grass which borders the sandy desert, is to be seen through all this tract of country. The Wargumma and Noile, two great tribes of Arabs, are masters of the deserts.

Within about four days' journey of Tripoli, he met the Emir Hadje conducting the caravan of pilgrims from Fez and Zuz in Morocco across Africa to Mecca.

## Bengazi—Petrified City.

He was a middle-aged man, of a stupid aspect, and uncle to the reigning Emperor of Morocco. His caravan, a scurvy disorderly, unarmed crowd, consisting of about 3000 men, with from 12 to 14,000 camels, loaded with merchandize and provisions, were ready to flee before Mr. Bruce's company of fifteen horsemen, when they first came up with them; but, when they learned who they were, their fears ceased, and they became as insolent as they had before been dastardly.

At Tripoli our traveller was hospitably received by the British consul. He thence sent his books, drawings, and supernumerary instruments, by an English servant to Smyrna, and himself crossed the Gulf of Sidra to Bengazi. The province of Bengazi was a scene of confusion. The brother of the Bey of Tripoli who commanded there was a weak, unhealthy young man. Two tribes of Arabs, who occupied the territory on the west of the town, had, by his misconduct been involved in a quarrel. One had prevailed over the other, and driven them out within the town, which was crowded with thousands of inhabitants, for whom there were neither lodgings nor provisions. The streets were every night strewed with the carcasses of numbers who died of hunger; and many were said to have supported life with food at the very idea of which human nature shudders.

Retiring as hastily as possible from Bengazi, Mr. Bruce continued his journey by Arsinoe and Barca to Ras Sem, where he had the satisfaction of disproving a story common in Africa, and circulated in England by a Tripoline ambassador. It was asserted, that here existed a city, the inhabitants of which had been all petrified by a special judgment of heaven. They were described, to the great amazement of the credulous, as still to be seen fixed in the several attitudes and at the different employments in which they were overtaken by divine vengeance. The Arabs also informed Mr. Bruce that he would there find a petrified city:

---

Ptolemeta—Shipwreck of the author.

---

city : but the only curiosity he met with was the jerboa, a species of mice little inferior in agility and activity to the winged tribes.

He advanced next to Ptolemeta, on the sea-coast, the ancient Ptolemais built by Ptolemy Philadelphus. Of the remains of architecture which it affords, he took draughts. Learning here that the adjacent country was in the utmost confusion ; that the caravan of Morocco had been plundered by a powerful tribe of Arabs, who occupied the country between Ptolemeta and Alexandria ; and that Derna, the town to which he was next to proceed in his intended route, was ravaged at once by famine, plague, and civil dissensions, he took a passage on board a Greek vessel belonging to Lampedosa, which was then about to sail from the harbour.

This vessel was very ill accoutred ; she had enough of sail, but no ballast. A crowd of passengers, fleeing from the famine, were taken on board. The commander was not accustomed to those seas. A light, steady breeze, promising a short and agreeable voyage, soon became violent and cold. A storm of hail followed ; and the gathering of the clouds seemed to threaten thunder. The captain was preparing, on Mr. Bruce's persuasion, to put into the harbour of Bengazi, when the vessel unexpectedly struck on a sunken rock in the entrance of that harbour, and at no great distance from the shore.—One of two boats that were towed astern, was presently unlashd by Roger M'Cormack, Mr. Bruce's Irish servant, who, before he deserted into the Spanish service had been a sailor on board the Monarch. Mr. Bruce, with him and his other servant, went down into the boat. A crowd followed, whom they could not prevent. Before they had moved twice the length of the boat from the ship, they were drenched by a wave which nearly filled the boat. The wretches who filled it raised a howl of despair. Mr. Bruce had before stripped himself to a short under waist-coat

---

He narrowly escapes from being drowned.

---

coat and linen drawers: a silk sash was wrapped round him: in the breast-pocket of his vest were a pencil, a small pocket book, and a watch. The next wave was to determine the fate of those in the boat. He therefore called to his servants to follow him, if they could swim, and instantly let himself down in the face of the wave. With all his strength and activity in swimming, he could not withstand the force of the surf. From the ebbing wave he received a violent blow on the breast, which threw him upon his back, and occasioned him to swallow a considerable quantity of water. He dipped his head, while the next wave passed over. He was now breathless, weary, and exhausted, but almost on land. A large wave floated him up. But he was again struck on the face and breast, and involuntarily twisted about by the violence of the ebbing wave. As a last effort, he tried to feel the bottom, and happily reached the sand with his feet, although the water was still deeper than his mouth. This success inspired him with new vigour. He floated on with the influx of the wave, and by sinking and touching the ground, withstood the ebbs. At last, finding his hands and knees upon the sand, he fixed his fingers in it, crawled forward a few paces when the sea retired; and at length, having got beyond its reach, he sunk insensible on the ground.

The Arabs in the meantime came down to plunder the vessel. The persons in the boat had perished. One boat was thrown ashore. The Arabs had several others; in these they made their way to the ship, to plunder the wreck, and brought the people safe to land. A blow on the neck, with the butt end of a lance, was what first awakened Mr. Bruce from the senseless state in which he lay, after escaping the violence of the waves. The Arabs believing him from his dress to be a Turk, after beating, kicking, and cursing him, stripped him of the scanty clothing yet upon him; and after treating the rest in the same manner, went to their boats, to seek the bodies of those who had been drowned.

---

His treatment by the Arabs.

---

In this piteous condition, our traveller crawled up among some white sandy hillocks, and there concealed himself as much as possible. Naked as he was, he durst not approach the tents where the women were, for fear of meeting with still severer treatment. His confusion had hitherto hindered him from recollecting that he could speak to them in their own language. It now occurred to him, from considering that the Arabs, when beating and stripping him, had uttered a gibberish, in imitation of Turkish, that he owed the ill usage which he had received, at least in part, to his having been mistaken for a Turk.—An old Arab, with a number of young men coming up to him, he saluted them in the customary phrase in their own language, *Salam Alicum!* Only one young man returned the salutation, and that in a contemptuous tone. The old man then asked whether he was a Turk? He replied, that he was a poor Christian physician, a dervish, who went about the world to do good for God's sake. 'Cretan?' No; he had never been in Crete: he was from Tunis, and was returning thither, having lost his all in the shipwreck of the vessel. A ragged dirty baraca was immediately thrown over him, and he was conducted to a tent, through the end of which was thrust a spear, the ensign of sovereignty. In this tent he saw the Shekh of the tribe, who, being at peace with the Bey of Bengazi and the Shekh of Ptolemata, ordered him a plentiful supper, of which his servants also partook. He complained to no purpose of the loss of all his medicines: The Arabs would give him no assistance to search for his instruments. After two days' stay, the Shekh restored all that had been taken from him and his company, and furnished them with camels, and a guide to conduct them to Bengazi. From Bengazi he sent a present to the Shekh, with promises of an handsome reward, if he would make his people fish up, and return the things which he had lost in the wreck. He thus recovered his silver watch in a shattered condition,





Wm. H. Storer

Wm. H. Storer



---

He visits Bengazi, Canea, Rhodes, Castelrosso, &c.

---

tion, some pencils, a small port-folio, and his pocket book.

At Bengazi he found a small French sloop, with the master of which he had been acquainted at Algiers, and who had come with a cargo of corn, which for a time relieved the necessities at least of the soldiers in the place. Our traveller, with his party, caught a quantity of fishes with a small net and lines; and procuring pepper, vinegar, and onions, with these and a very little bread, saved themselves from suffering by extremity of hunger. They in vain attempted to teach the starving multitude to take fish after their example.

With the French captain Mr. Bruce sailed for the Archipelago with a fair wind. In four or five days he landed safe at Canea, in the island of Crète, where he was taken dangerously ill. From Canea he sailed to Rhodes, and from Rhodes to Castelrosso, on the coast of Caramania. On leaving Castelrosso he proceeded to Cyprus; and from Cyprus, where he staid only half a day, to Sidon.

At Sidon he was kindly received by M. Clerambaut, French consul there. He made from Sidon several excursions into Syria, by Libanus and Anti-Libanus, but has not chosen to enter into a particular detail of those. From Canea and Rhodes he had written both to France and England for a moveable quadrant, a stop-watch, a time-keeper, a reflecting and an achromatic telescope to repair the losses sustained by his shipwreck.

He had the mortification to receive answers to those letters, informing him, that no such instruments could be at present procured; and that ridiculous accounts of his purposes in his travels, and of the route which he had chosen, had been circulated in Europe. The indignation with which he heard this, tempted him to renounce his design of exploring the sources of the Nile; but he resolved still to visit the famous ruins of Palmyra.

---

His arrival at Palmyra.

---

At the invitation first of Mr. Abbot, the British consul at Tripolia in Syria, and afterwards of his successor Mr. Fernon, our traveller now proceeded to Tripoli. In preparing for his expedition towards Palmyra, he visited the ancient Byblus, and bathed in the river Adonis. Through Latikea and Antioch, he passed on to Aleppo. At Aleppo he was afflicted with a return of a fever and ague, which he had first caught by his sufferings at Bengazi. By the attentions of Dr. Russel, he happily recovered from this dangerous illness.

When his health was re-established, he prosecuted his purpose. The deserts around Palmyra are inhabited by two rival tribes of Arabs; the Annecy, remarkable for having the finest horses in the world; and the Mowalli, who ride much worse horses, but are better soldiers. Mr. Bruce was fortunate enough to obtain the protection of the Shekh of the Mowalli, and directions from him by what road to travel to Palmyra.

Thus encouraged, he returned from Aleppo to Tripoli; set out at a time agreed upon with the Shekh to Hamath, the northern boundary of the Holy Land; and having there met at Arab, whom the friendly Shekh had sent to be his conductor, proceeded to Hassia. On his way he had occasion to cross the river Orontes, which passes through the plains where the best tobacco in Syria is cultivated. At some miserable huts near the river, inhabited by Turcomans, he asked the master of one to shew him the ford. The Turcoman readily did so: but Mr. Bruce had advanced but a short way through the pretended ford, when his horse fell on a sudden out of his depth. He had a rifle-gun slung across his shoulders, with a buff belt und swivel. Luckily the swivel gave way, and the gun fell to the bottom of the river. Thus disengaged, he and his horse swam separately ashore. At a small distance was a caphar, or turnpike. Mr. Bruce going thither to dry himself, was informed, that the Turcomans who had misguided him

---

He inspects the venerable ruins of Palmyra and Baalbec.

---

him were an infamous banditti, and that he and his horse had fallen from the remains of the wing of a bridge, which had formerly crossed the river in that place. The capharman then shewed his servants the right ford, and they passed in safety. From Hassia our traveller proceed to Cariateen, where he found Hassan, a kelp merchant, his old acquaintance, and two thousand of the Anney, encamped around. Two old men from the two tribes, the Mowalli and the Anney, accompanied the party on horseback to Palmyra. The tribes furnished them with camels, and they passed the desert, between Cariateen and Palmyra, in a day and two nights.

Just as they came within sight of the ruins, they ascended a hill of white gritty stone by a narrow winding road. Arrived at the top of that hill, they beheld before them one of the most stupendous sights that perhaps ever appeared to mortal eyes. An extensive plain, covered thick with magnificent buildings of white stone, which at a distance appeared like marble, of fine proportions, and agreeable forms; and at the end, the palace of the sun, more magnificent than any of the rest.

Of the ruins of Palmyra Mr. Bruce drew six angular views on large paper, and proceeded next to Baalbec, about 130 miles distant from the former. He reached Baalbec on the very day on which his friend, Emir Yousef, having reduced the city, and settled the government, was decamping to return home. The Emir made things about the city very agreeable to him, and left him to his freedom.

Baalbec is pleasantly situated on a plain, west of Anti-Libanus, about fifty miles from Hassia, and thirty from the ancient Byblus, on the nearest sea-coast. The interior of the temple of the sun at Baalbec exhibits some of the most perfect works of sculpture, and surpasses any thing at Palmyra.

Passing Tyre, Mr. Bruce became a mournful witness of the accomplishment of that prophecy, by which it was foretold, that the queen of nations should be a rock for fishermen to dry their nets on. Two wretched

---

His observations on visiting the ancient city of Tyre.

---

fishermen who had just been drawing their nets, were persuaded by Mr. Bruce to drag in those places where shell-fish were to be found. He was in hopes that they might bring out one of the famous purple-fishes, for which Tyre was renowned in antiquity. The attempt, however, was unsuccessful, and Mr. Bruce conjectured that under the story of the purple fishes, the Tyrians only concealed their knowledge of cochineal. He finished this expedition by arriving safe at the hospitable mansion of M. Clerambaut, at Sidon.

At Sidon he found letters from Europe, more agreeable than those which he had last received, with the time-pieces and astronomical instruments for which he had written. But still he wanted a quadrant: an instrument of essential importance for the farther prosecution of his purposes. He, however, determined now to visit Egypt, where he might examine the most ancient remains of architecture. Nordon, Pococke, and others, had already given general accounts of the Egyptian architecture; but he wished to observe the proportions of their columns, and the general construction of their buildings, Observations which he might thus add to his former stock would furnish materials for a pleasant and useful amusement in his old age. A letter which he now received from M. de Buffon contributed somewhat to make him alter his resolution. M. de Buffon, M. Guys, and several other French philosophers of great respectability of character, had obtained for him a moveable quadrant from the "French king's own military academy at Marseilles." A letter from Mr. Russel informed him, that the astronomers of Europe were now less sanguine in their hopes of discovering the sun's parallax by the observation of the transit of Venus; and that a journey into Abyssinia, to explore the history of that country, would be considered as a much more important service to learning. A letter from his correspondent at Alexandria, at the same time, informed him that the quadrant and his other instruments were ready in that city.

---



---

## CHAPTER II.

---



---

Mr. Bruce sails from Sidon—Touches at Cyprus—Arrives at Alexandria—Proceeds to Rosetta up the Nile to Cairo—His interviews with Ali Bey—Visits the Pyramids—Embarks on the Nile for Upper Egypt—Howadat Arabs—Metrahenny and Mohannan, the ruins of ancient Memphis—Fishermen on the Nile—Island of Halouan—False Pyramids—Sugarcanes—Ruins of Antinopolis—Ashmouneim—Ruins at Gawa—Achmim—Magnificent remains at Dendera—Adventure there with a saint—Furshout—Ruins of Thebes—Colossal statues—Remarkable paintings—Luxor and Carnoc—Ruins at Esne the ancient Lato-polis—Covenant made between Mr. Bruce and the Ababde Arabs—Syene—Cataract of the Nile—Journey from Kenne across the desert of Thebais to Cosseir—Marble mountains—Arrival at Cosseir—Adventure with the Ababde—Jibbel Zumrud, the Mountain of Emeralds—Voyage in the Red Sea—Jaffateen Islands—Tor—Yambo—Jidda—Mr. Bruce's adventures there in the disguise of a Turk—Singular mode of transacting business—Polygamy—Konfodah—Sibt—Loheia—Mocha—Streights of Babelmandel—Foosht—Baccalan—An Abyssinian Ghost—Zimmer—Sharks—Volcano of Jibbel Teir—The vessel strikes on a rock—Detection of the Ghost—Island of Dehalac—Arrival at Massuah.

ON Saturday the 15th of June 1768, Mr. Bruce sailed from the once opulent and powerful city of Sidon, for the island of Cyprus. During this voyage he observed a number of thin white clouds, which came evidently from the mountains of Ayssinia, and were flitting towards Mount Taurus, whence these were to bring new stores of vapour, to occasion the overflowing of the Nile, by breaking against the lofty and rugged mountains of the south. On the 16th, at dawn of day, he observed a high hill, which he took for Mount Olympus, The rest of the island soon after appeared in view. Cyprus remained long undiscovered by the ancient navigators of those seas. It was not known at the building of Tyre, 500 years after ships had begun to pass around it. At its discovery it was overgrown with wood. On the west side of the island the wood still remains thick and im-

size find shelter there; and the inhabitants affirm, than even an elephant was alive there not many years ago.

A great many medals, though very few of them good, are dug up in Cyprus; silver ones, of very excellent workmanship, are found near Paphos, of very little value in the eyes of antiquarians, being chiefly of towns, of the size of those found at Crete and Rhodes, and all the islands of the Archipelago. Intaglios there are some few, partly in a very excellent Greek style, and generally upon better stones than usual in the islands.

On the 17th of June the vessel left Lernica, about four o'clock in the afternoon, and on the 18th, a little before noon, a very fresh and favourable breeze springing up from the N. W. the master pointed the prow directly upon Alexandria.

The 20th of June, early in the morning, our traveller had a distant prospect of Alexandria rising from the sea. On the first view of the city, the mixture of old monuments, such as the Column of Pompey, with the high Moorish towers and steeples, raise our expectations of the consequence of the ruins we are to find; but the moment we are in port, the illusion ends, and we distinguish the immense Herculan works of ancient times, now few in number, from the ill-imagined, ill-constructed, and imperfect buildings of the several barbarous masters of Alexandria in later ages. There are two ports, the Old and the New. The entrance to the latter, in which alone European ships can lie, is both difficult and dangerous; and the port itself is by no means safe, as numbers of vessels are lost while riding at anchor.\*

Alexandria

---

\* Mr. Bruce relates that while he was at Alexandria on his return to Europe in March 1773, upwards of 40 vessels were here cast on shore, and dashed to pieces. Most of them belonging to Ragusa and the small ports of Provence; but the ships of nations accustomed to the ocean suffered little injury. It was curious, he says, to observe the



Alexandria has been often taken since the time of Cæsar.\* It was at last destroyed by the Venetians and Cypriots, upon, or rather after, the release of St. Lewis.—The building of the present gates and walls, which some have thought to be antique, does not seem earlier than the last restoration in the 13th century. Some parts of the gates and walls may be of older date; (and probably were those of the last Caliph before Salidau) but, except these, and the pieces of columns which lie horizontally in different parts of the wall, every thing else is apparently of very late times, and the work has been huddled together in great haste. There is nothing beautiful or pleasant in the present Alexandria, but a handsome street of modern houses, where a very active and intelligent number of merchants live upon the miserable remnants of

the different procedure of the seamen belonging to these different nations upon the occasion. As soon as the squall began to become violent, the masters of the Ragusan vessels and French Mediterranean traders, after putting out every anchor and cable, betook themselves to their boats, and fled to the nearest shore, leaving their ships to their fate. They well knew the furniture of their vessels to be too flimsy to trust their lives to it. Many of the cables, made of a kind of grass called *spartum*, parted with the anchors, and the ships perished. On the contrary, the British, Danish, Swedish, and Dutch, inured to the navigation of the ocean, no sooner perceived the storm beginning than they quitted their houses, and hastened on board. Relying on the sufficiency of their tackle, they were under no apprehension from the weather, provided they were present to obviate unforeseen accidents. Some pointed their yards to the wind, and others lowered them upon deck; after which they walked to and fro, bidding defiance to the utmost fury of the storm. Not a man stirred from the ships till the next day, when the returning calm weather summoned them to assist their unfortunate brethren, whose wrecked vessels lay scattered on the shore.

\* When it was taken by the Saracens, Amron, general of the victorious army, wrote thus to the Caliph: "I have taken the city of the West. It is of immense extent. It contains innumerable wonders. There are in it 4000 baths, 12,000 dealers in fresh oil, 4000 Jews who pay tribute, 400 comedians," &c. "Burn these books," said Omar, with respect to the famous library collected by the Ptolemies: "if they say nothing but what is in the Koran they are useless: if any thing contradictory to it, dangerous."

that trade, which made its glory in the first times. It is thinly inhabited ; and there is a tradition among the natives, that, more than once, it has been in agitation to abandon it altogether, and retire to Rosetto, or Cairo ; but that they have been withheld by the opinion of divers saints from Arabia, who have assured them, that Mecca being destroyed, (as it must be, as they think, by the Russians) Alexandria is then to become the holy place, and that Mahomet's body is to be transported thither.

On Mr. Bruce's arrival at Alexandria, he found that the plague had raged in that city and neighbourhood from the beginning of March, and that two days only before their arrival people had begun to open their houses and communicate with each other ; but it was no matter, St. John's day was past, the miraculous nucta, or dew,\* had fallen, and every body went about their ordinary business in safety, and without fear. Here Mr. Bruce received his instruments, and found them in good condition.

Our traveller being now prepared for any enterprise, he left with eagerness the thread-bare inquiries into the meagre remains of this once-famous capital of Egypt.—The journey to Rosetto is always performed by land, as the mouth of the branch of the Nile leading to that place, called the Bogaz, is very shallow and dangerous to pass, and often tedious ; besides, nobody wishes to be a partner for any time in a voyage with Egyptian sailors, if he can possibly avoid it. The journey by land is also reputed dangerous, and people travel burdened with arms, which they are determined never to use.

All Egypt is full of deep dust and sand from the beginning of March to the commencement of the inundation. It is this fine powder and sand, raised and loosened by the heat of the sun, and want of dew, and

---

\* The dew which falls on St. John's night is supposed to possess the virtue of stopping the plague.

---



---

Arrival of Mr. Bruce at Rosetto.

---



---

not being tied fast, as it were, by any root or vegetation, which the Nile carries off with it, and buries in the sea, and which many ignorantly suppose comes from Abyssinia, where every river runs in a bed of rock. When you leave the sea, you strike off nearly at right angles, and pursue your journey to the eastward. Here heaps of stone and trunks of pillars are set up to guide you in your road, through moving sands, which stand in hillocks, in proper directions, and which conduct you safely to Rosetto, surrounded on one side by these hills of sand, which seem ready to cover it.

Rosetto stands upon that branch of the Nile which was called the Bulbuttic Branch, about four miles from the sea. It is a large, clean, neat town, or village, upon the eastern side of the Nile. It is about three miles long, much frequented by studious and religious Mahometans; among these too are a considerable number of merchants, it being the intrepot between Cairo and Alexandria, and vice versa; here too the merchants have their factors, who superintend and watch over the merchandise which passes the Bogaz to and from Cairo.—There are many gardens, and much verdure, about Rosetto; the ground is low and retains long the moisture it imbibes from the overflowing of the Nile. Here also are many curious plants and flowers brought from different countries.

On the 30th of June, Mr. Bruce embarked for Cairo. There are wonderful tales told at Alexandria, as well as at Cairo, of the danger of passing over the desert to Rosetto. After you embark on the Nile in your way to Cairo, you hear of pilots, and masters of vessels, who land you among robbers to share your plunder, and twenty such like stories, all of them of old date, and which perhaps happened long ago, or never happened at all. But provided the government of Cairo is settled, and you do not land at villages in strife with each other, (in which circumstances no person of any nation is safe,) you must be very un-

---

He visits Cairo.

---

fortunate indeed, if any great accident befall you between Alexandria and Cairo.

Our traveller arrived at Cairo in the beginning of July, recommended to the very hospitable house of Julian and Bertran, to whom he imparted his resolution of pursuing his journey to Abyssinia. The wildness of the intention seemed to strike them greatly on which account they endeavoured to dissuade him from it, but, seeing him resolved, they kindly offered their most effectual services.

That part of Cairo in which the French are settled is exceedingly commodious, and fit for retirement. It consists of one long street, where all the merchants of that nation live together. It is shut at one end by large gates, where there is a guard, and these are kept constantly close in the time of the plague. At the other end is a large garden tolerably kept, in which there are several pleasant walks and seats. All the enjoyment that Christians can hope for, among this vile people, reduces itself to peace and quiet; nobody seeks for more. There are, however, wicked emissaries who are constantly employed by threats, lies, and extravagant demands, to torment them, and keep them from enjoying that repose which would content them instead of freedom, and more solid happiness, in their own country.

There are perhaps four hundred inhabitants in Cairo, who have absolute power, and administer what they call justice, in their own way, and according to their own views. But fortunately, in Mr. Bruce's time, this many-headed monster was no more; there was but one Ali Bey, and there was neither inferior nor superior jurisdiction exercised, but his officers only. This happy state did not last long. In order to be a Bey, the person must have been a slave, and bought for money at a market. Every Bey has a great number of servants, slaves to him, as he was to others before; these are his guards, and these he promotes to places in his household, according as they are qualified.

---

His description of the government and manners of the citizens.

---

qualified. It is very extraordinary to find a race of men in power, all agreeing to leave their succession to strangers, in preference to their own children, for a number of ages; and that no one should ever have attempted to make his son succeed him, either in dignity or estate, in preference to a slave, whom he has bought for money like a beast.

The instant that Mr. Bruce arrived at Cairo was perhaps the only one in which he ever could have been allowed, single and unprotected as he was, to have made his intended journey. Ali Bey, after having undergone many changes of fortune, and been banished by his rivals from his capital, at last enjoyed the satisfaction of returning and making himself absolute in Cairo. Though a man of a good understanding, he was a still a Mameluke, and had the principles of a slave. Three persons of different religions at once possessed his confidence, and governed his councils. The one was a Jew, the other a Greek, and the third an Egyptian Copt, his secretary; and it would have required great penetration to discover which of the three men was the most worthless character. The secretary, whose name was Risk, had the address to supplant the other two, and at the period of Mr. Bruce's arrival in Egypt, was all-powerful with the Bey. Risk possessed astrology, and was greatly prepossessed in favour of our traveller by his apparatus of instruments, which were opened in the custom-house of Alexandria. He not only procured an order that they should be delivered to Mr. Bruce without duty or fees; but likewise assured him, as soon as he reached Cairo, that he was under the immediate protection of the Bey, and that he would himself provide him with any thing which he might want. Mr. Bruce, unable to account for his shew of friendship, suspected some design, and communicated his apprehensions to his landlord Mr. Bertran, who undertook to sound Risk on the subject, and at the same time cautioned him against either offending the

the

---

---

Great influence of the Greeks in Abyssinia.

---

---

the secretary or trusting himself in his hands, as he was a man capable of the blackest projects, and merciless in their execution. Risk's curiosity soon disclosed the secret. He inquired of Bertran respecting Mr. Bruce's knowledge of the stars; and his friend, who then clearly perceived the drift of the secretary's conduct, so prepossessed him in favour of our traveller's superior science, that Risk could not forbear expressing his great expectations of being now enabled to foresee the destiny of the Bey, and whether he should be successful or not in an attempt he was about to make upon Mecca. Fortune-telling, however, did not appear to Mr. Bruce a very enviable profession where bastinado or impaling might be the reward of a mistake; but he had the most credulous people in the world to deal with, and was sensible of the necessity of escaping as speedily as possible before the issue of any of his prophecies should arrive.

In a few days he received a letter from Risk desiring him to repair to the convent of St. George, about three miles from Cairo, where the Greek patriarch had directed an apartment to be prepared for his reception, and where he was to receive the Bey's orders. Here he met with his old friend Father Christopher, from whom he had received instruction in the Greek language, at Algiers; and who having quitted Barbary, had repaired to Egypt, where he had been appointed archimandrite, which is the second dignity in the Greek church, under the patriarch. It was at his solicitation that an apartment in the convent was assigned to Mr. Bruce, and from him he received important information and assistance in regard to his plan of penetrating into Abyssinia. This priest acquainted him that there were then many Greeks in Abyssinia who held the highest offices of the state, that they had all the greatest veneration for the patriarch, who was the head of the Abyssinian church, and was honored by the whole nation. He introduced his

---

Interview of Mr. Bruce with the Bey of Cairo.

---

his friend to the patriarch, from whom he procured from him letters of recommendation to the principal Greeks at Gondar, and a general bull, or pastoral admonition, in which they were enjoined to renounce their pride and vanity, and to support with all their influence the strangers whom the patriarch sent among them.

Meanwhile Risk on the evening sent for Mr. Bruce to pay his first visit to the Bey. He was a much younger man than he had conceived him to be ; he was sitting upon a large sofa, covered with crimson cloth of gold ; his turban, his girdle, and the head of his dagger, all thick covered with fine brilliants ; one in his turban, that served to support a sprig of brilliants also, was amongst the largest Mr. Bruce had ever seen. The Bey entered into discourse concerning the Russian and Turkish war, and conversed some time with him on that subject.

Two or three nights afterwards the Bey sent for him again. It was near eleven o'clock before he obtained admittance. He met the Janissary Aga going out from him, and a number of soldiers at the door. As Mr. Bruce did not know him, he passed him, without ceremony, which is not usual for any person to do. Whenever he mounts on horseback, as he was then just going to do, he has absolute power of life and death, without appeal, all over Cairo and its neighbourhood. He stopt our traveller just at the threshold, and asked one of the Bey's people who he was ? and was answered, " It is Hakim Englese," the English philosopher, or physician. He asked Mr. Bruce in Turkish, in a very polite manner, if he would come and see him, for he was not well ? He answered him in Arabic, " Yes, whenever he pleased, but could not then stay, as he had received a message that the Bey was waiting." He replied in Arabic, " No, no ; go, for God's sake go ; any time will do for me."

The Bey was sitting, leaning forward, with a wax taper in one hand, and reading a small slip of

---

The Bey's strange opinion of Mr. Bruce.

---

paper, which he held close to his face. He seemed to have little light, or weak eyes; nobody was near him: his people had been all dismissed, or were following the Janissary Aga out. He did not seem to observe Mr. Bruce till he was close upon him; and started when he accosted him with "*Salam,*" the usual salutation. He told him he came upon his message. He said, "I thank you, did I send for you?" and, without giving him leave to reply, went on, "O true, I did so," and fell to reading his paper again. After this was over, he complained that he had been ill, that he vomited immediately after dinner, though he had eaten moderately; that his stomach was not yet settled, and he was afraid something had been given him to do him mischief. Our traveller felt his pulse, which was low and weak; but very little feverish, and desired he would order his people to look if his meat was dressed in copper properly tinned. He assured him he was in no danger, and insinuated that he thought he had been guilty of some excess before dinner; at which the Bey smiled, and said to Risk, who was standing by, "*Afrite! Afrite!*" he is a devil! he is a devil! Mr. Bruce then said, If your stomach is really uneasy from what you have eaten, warm some water, and, if you please, put a little green tea into it, and drink it till it makes you vomit gently, and that will give you ease; after which you may take a dish of strong coffee, and go to bed, or a glass of spirits, if you have any that are good." At this proposal he looked surprized, and calmly replied: "Spirits! do you know that I am a Mussulman?"—"But I am not, Sir," answered our traveller. "I tell you what is good for your body, and have nothing to do with your religion or your soul." He seemed much pleased with this frankness, and only observed, "He speaks like a man." Next morning the Bey's secretary came to Mr. Bruce at the convent, and complained that his master was not yet well; and still entertained apprehensions that he had been poisoned.



## The Pyramids of Geeza.

soned. On inquiring how the water had operated, Risk replied that the Bey had not taken any, but that he had come by his desire to learn how it was to be made. Mr. Bruce immediately shewed him; on which he modestly insinuated that our traveller was to drink it himself and vomit, in order to instruct him how to act with the Bey. His proposal to be both patient and physician at the same time was not perfectly agreeable, and Mr. Bruce told the secretary that he would vomit him which would answer the purpose of instruction just as well, but this offer was not excepted. The Greek priest, Father Christopher, coming in at the moment, they agreed to make the experiment on him; but he would not consent to this, and produced a young monk whom the forced to take the water whether he would or not.

As Mr. Bruce's favour with the Bey was now established by frequent interviews, he thought of leaving his solitary mansion at the convent. He requested the Bey's secretary, to procure his peremptory letters of recommendation to Shekh Haman, to the governor of Syene, Ibrim, and Deir, in Upper Egypt. He procured also the same from the janissaries, to these three last places, as their garrisons are from that body at Cairo which they call their Port. He had also letters from Ali Bey, to the Bey of Suez, to the Sherriffe of Mecca, to the Naybe (so they call the Sovereign) of Masuah, and to the King of Sennar, and his minister for the time being. At length having obtained all his letters and dispatches, as well from the patriarch as from the Bey, he set about preparing for his journey.

On the other side of the Nile, from Cairo, is Geeza; and about eleven miles beyond this place are the pyramids, called the pyramids of Geeza, the description of which is in every body's hands. Engravings of them had been published in England, with plans of them, upon a large scale, two years before Mr. Bruce came into Egypt, and were shown him by Mr.

---

Thoughts concerning the origin of these Pyramids.

---

Davidson, consul of Nice, whose drawings they were. He it was too that discovered the small chamber above the landing place, after you ascend through the long gallery of the great Pyramid on your left hand, and he left the ladder by which he ascended, for the satisfaction of other travellers. But there is nothing in the chamber further worthy of notice, than its having escaped discovery so many ages.

It is very singular, that for such a time as these Pyramids have been known, travellers were content rather to follow the report of the ancients, than to make use of their own eyes: yet it has been a constant belief, that the stones composing these Pyramids have been brought from the Libyan mountains, though any one who will take the pains to remove the sand on the south side, will find the solid rock there hewn into steps. In the roof of the large chamber, where the sarcophagus stands, as also in the top of the roof of the gallery, as you go up into that chamber, you see large fragments of the rock, affording an unanswerable proof, that those Pyramids were once huge rocks, standing where they now are; that some of them, the most proper from their form, were chosen for the body of the Pyramid, and the others hewn into steps, to serve for the superstructure, and the exterior parts of them.\*

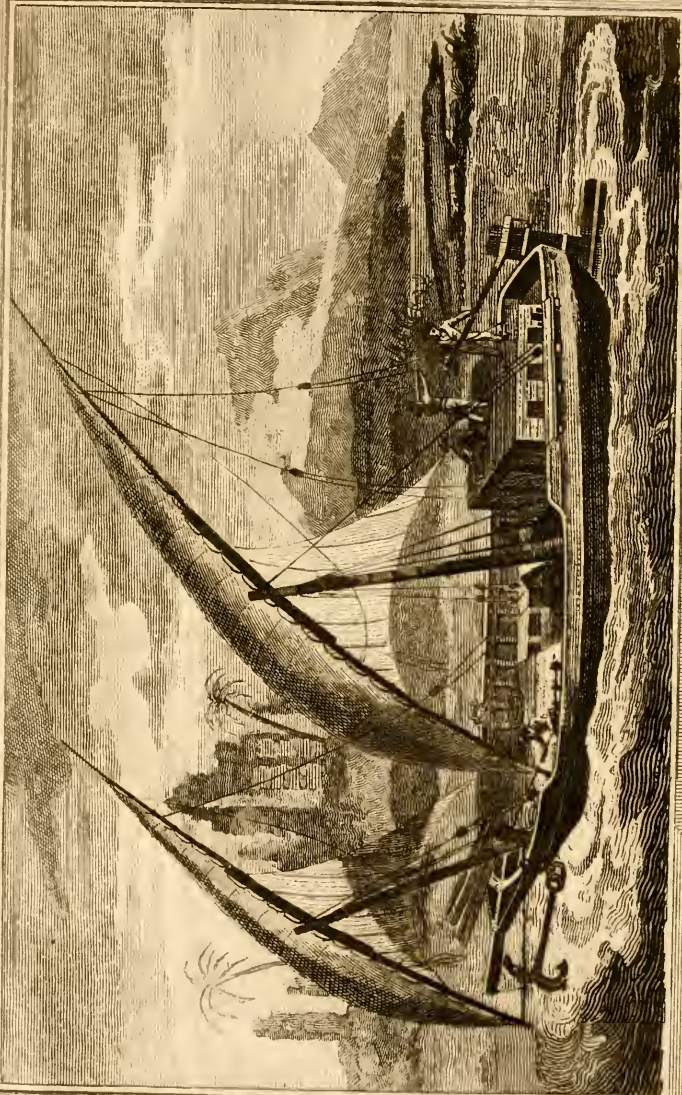
Mr. Bruce, having now provided every thing necessary, and taken rather a melancholy leave of his very indulgent friends, who had great apprehensions that he and his companions would never return; and fearing that their stay till the very excessive heats were past might involve them in another difficulty, that of missing the Etesian winds, he secured a boat to carry them to Furshout, the residence of Hamam, the Shekh of Upper Egypt. This sort of vessel is

---

\* This opinion of Mr. Bruce is disputed, for it is well-known that large stones were used in all the ancient buildings of Egypt, and that these were often brought from a considerable distance.

called





*Captain's Cabin - Boarding the Ship*

---

Mr. Bruce's departure from Cairo.

---

called a Canja, and is one of the most commodious used on any river, being safe, and expeditious at the same time, though at first sight it has a strong appearance of danger. That on which they embarked was about 100 feet from stern to stem, with two masts, main and foremast, and two monstrous *Latine* sails, the main-sail yard being about 120 feet in length.

A certain kind of robber, peculiar to the Nile, is constantly on the watch to rob boats, in which they suppose the crew are off their guard. They generally approach the boat when it is calm, either swimming under water, or when it is dark, upon goat skins; after which they mount with the utmost silence, and take away whatever they can lay their hands on. They are not very fond, it seems, of meddling with vessels in which they see Franks or Europeans, because by them some have been wounded with fire-arms. The attempts are generally made when you are at anchor, or under weigh, at night, in very moderate weather; but more commonly when you are falling down the stream without masts; for it requires strength, vigour, and skill, to get aboard a vessel going before a brisk wind; though indeed they are abundantly provided with all these requisites.

It was the 12th of December when they embarked on the Nile at Bulac, on board the Canja. At first Mr. Bruce had the precaution to apply to his friend Risk concerning the captain Hagi Hassan Abou Cuffi, and obliged him to give his son Mahomet in security for his good behaviour. There was nothing that he so much desired as to be at some distance from Cairo. As incivility and extortion always attend you in this detestable country when you are about to leave it.

The wind being contrary, they were obliged to advance against the stream, by having the boat drawn with a rope. They advanced a few miles by two convents of Cophts, called Deireteen. Here they stop-

---

His friendly interview with the Howadat.

---

ped to pass the night, having had a fine view of the Pyramids of Geeza and Saccara, and being then in sight of a prodigious number of others built of white clay, and stretching far into the desert to the southwest. Two of these seemed full as large as those that are called the Pyramids of Geeza. One of them was of a very extraordinary form; it seemed as if it had been intended at first to be a large one, but that the builder's art or means had failed him, and that he had brought it to a very misshapen disproportioned head at last.

On the side of the Nile, opposite to their boat, a little farther to the south, was a tribe of Arabs encamped. These were subject to Cairo, or were then at peace with its government. They are called Howadat, being a part of the Atouni, a large tribe that possesses the Isthmus of Suez, and from that go up between the Red Sea and the mountains that bound the east part of the Vally of Egypt. They reach to the length of Cosseir, where they border upon another large tribe called Ababdé, which extends from thence up into Nubia. Both these are what were anciently called *Shepherds*, and are constantly at war with each other. Some of these people straggled down to the boat to beg tobacco and coffee, and two of them went on board. Mr. Bruce recollected that when in Barbary, he had lived with the tribe of Noile, who were of the same race with the Howadat, and this circumstance soon led to a friendship with the latter who insisted on fetching one of their Shekhs.

The dais or master of the boat had not yet made his appearance; and Mr. Bruce determined to engage their people to perform a piece of service to which they readily offered themselves. He desired that early next morning, they would have a horse and a boy in readiness to carry a letter to Ali Bey's secretary; but no sooner were they gone on shore, than one of the boat's crew stole off on foot, and before day our traveller was awakened by the arrival  
of

---

The Shekh of the Howadat attends Mr. Bruce in his travels.

---

of the Rais Abou Cuffii and his son Mahomet. The former was intoxicated though a Sherriffe, a hagi, and half a saint besides, who, as he himself asserted, never tasted fermented liquor. The son was greatly terrified. He said he should have been impaled had the messenger arrived and declared he would not run the risk of being surety, and of going back to Cairo to answer for his father's faults, lest, one day or other, on some complaint of that kind, he should be taken out of his bed and bastinated to death, without knowing for what offence. An altercation ensued; the father declined remaining behind for pretty much the same reasons, and at length they agreed that both should go the voyage, and that one of the Moor servants in the boat should return to Cairo to fetch Mahomet's clothes, while his father slept himself sober.

In the mean time Mr. Bruce bargained with the Shekh of the Howadat to furnish him with horses to go to Metraheny, or Mohannan, where once he said had stood Mimf, a large city, the capital of all Egypt. All this was executed with great success. Early in the morning the Shekh of the Howadat had passed at Miniel, where there is a ferry, the Nile being very deep: and attended our traveller, with five horsemen and a spare horse for himself, at Metraheny, south of Miniel, where there is a great plantation of palm trees.

On the 13th, in the morning about eight o'clock, our travellers let out their vast sails, and passed a very considerable village called Turra, on the east side of the river, and Shekh Atman, a small village, consisting of about thirty houses on the west. The Nile here is about a quarter of a mile broad; and there cannot be the smallest doubt, in any person disposed to be convinced, that this is by very far the narrowest part of Egypt yet seen; for it is certainly less than half a mile between the foot of the mountain and the Libyan shore.

Having gained the western edge of the palm-trees  
at

---

The travellers obtain a fine view of the Pyramids of Geeza.

---

at Mohannan, our travellers had a fair view of the Pyramids at Geeza, which lie in a direction nearly S. W. They saw three large granite pillars S. W. of Mohannan, and a piece of a broken chest or cistern of granite; but no obelisks, or stones with hieroglyphics, and they thought the greatest part of the ruins seemed to point that way, or more southerly. These, their conductor said, were the ruins of Mimf, the ancient seat of the Pharaohs, Kings of Egypt, adding that there was another Mimf, far down in the Delta, by which he meant Menouf, below Terane, and Batnel Baccara. Mr. Bruce returned with his guide, perceiving now that he could obtain no further intelligence in the sands. Mr. Bruce saw great numbers of hares, and was told by his guide, that if he would go and accompany him to a place near Faioume, he might kill half a boat load of them in a day, and antelopes likewise, for he knew where to procure dogs. Meanwhile he invited our traveller to shoot at them there, which he did not choose to do, but passed very quietly among the date trees wishing to avoid rather than to excite curiosity.

All the people in the date villages seemed to be of a yellower and more sick colour than any our traveller had ever seen; besides, they had an inanimate, dejected, grave countenance, and seemed rather to shun than wish for any conversation.

It was near four o'clock in the afternoon when they returned to their boatmen. By the way they met one of their Moors, who told them, that they had drawn up the boat opposite to the northern point of the palm trees of Metraheny.

The wind was fair and fresh, rather a little on their beam; when, in great spirits, they hoisted their main and fore-sails, leaving the point of Metraheny. They saw the Pyramids of Saccara still S. W. of them; several villages on both sides of the river, but very poor and miserable; part of the ground on the east side had been overflowed, yet was not sown; a

proof



---

Singular mode of fishing adopted by the inhabitants near Cairo.

---

proof of the oppression and distress the husbandman suffers in the neighbourhood of Cairo, by the avarice and disagreement of the different officers of that motley incomprehensible government.

After sailing about two miles, they saw three men fishing in a very extraordinary manner and situation. They were on a raft of palm branches, supported on a float of clay jars made fast together. The form was triangular, like the face of a Pyramid; two men, each provided with a casting net, stood at the two corners, and threw their net into the stream together; the third stood at the third corner, which was foremost, and threw his net the moment the other two drew theirs out of the water. This they repeated, in perfect time, and with surprising regularity. The Rais thought our travellers wanted to buy fish, and letting go his main-sail, ordered them on board with a great tone of superiority. They were in a moment alongside; and one of them went on board, lashing his miserable raft to a rope at their stern. In recompence for their trouble, Mr. Bruce gave them some large pieces of tobacco, and this transported them so much, that they brought him a basket of several different kinds of fish, all small, excepting one laid on the top of the basket, which was a clear salmon-coloured fish, silvered upon its sides, with a shade of blue upon its back. It weighed about 10 lb. and was most excellent, being perfectly firm, and white like a perch. There are some of this kind of 70 lb. weight. Mr. Bruce examined their nets; they were rather of a smaller circumference than our casting nets in England; the weight, as far as he could guess, rather heavier in proportion than ours, the thread that composed them being smaller. He could not sufficiently admire their success, in a violent stream of deep water, such as the Nile; for the river was at least twelve feet deep where they were fishing, and the current very strong. These fishers offered willingly to take Mr. Bruce upon the raft to teach

8 him

---

The travellers arrive at Halouan and Woodan.

---

him their method; but his curiosity went not so far. They said their fishing was merely accidental, and in course of their trade, which was selling these earthen jars, which they procured near Ashmounein; and after having carried the raft with them to Cairo, they untie, sell them at the market, and carry the produce home in money, or in necessaries, upon their backs. A very poor æconomical trade, but sufficient as they said, from the carriage of crude materials, the moulding, making, and sending them to market, to Cairo, and to different places in the Delta, to afford occupation to two thousand men.

About two o'clock in the afternoon, they came to the point of an island; there were several villages with date trees on both sides of them; the ground was overflowed by the Nile, and cultivated. The current was very strong here. They then came to Halouan, an island now divided into a number of small ones, by calishes being cut through it, and, under different Arabic names, they still reach very far up the stream. Mr. Bruce landed to see if there were remains of the olive-tree which Strabo says grew here, but without success. Our traveller imagined, however, that there had been such a tree; because opposite to one of the divisions into which this large island is broken, there was a village called Zeitoun, or the Olive Tree.

On the 15th of December, the weather being nearly calm, they left the north end of the island; their course was due south, the line of the river; and three miles farther they passed Woodan, and a collection of villages, all going by that name, upon the east. The ground is all cultivated about this village, to the foot of the mountains, which is not above four miles; but it is full eight on the west, all overflowed and sown. The Nile is here but shallow, and narrow, not exceeding a quarter of a mile broad, and three feet deep, owing, as is supposed, to the resistance made by the island in the middle of the current,  
and

---

Appearance of the banks of the Nile.

---

and by a bend which it makes, thus intercepting the sand brought down by the stream. The mountains here come down till within two miles of *Suf el Woodan*, for so the village is called. They were told there were some ruins to the westward of this, but only rubbish, neither arch nor column standing.

The wind still freshening, they passed several villages on each side, all surrounded with palm-trees, verdant and pleasant, but conveying an idea of sameness and want of variety, such as every traveller must have felt who has sailed in the placid, muddy, green-banked rivers in Holland. The Nile, however, is here full a mile broad, the water deep, and the current strong. The wind seemed to be exasperated by the resistance of the stream, and blew fresh and steadily, as indeed it generally does where the current is violent.

They passed with great velocity *Nizelet Embarak*, *Cubabac*, *Nizelet Omar*, *Racca Kibeer*, then *Racca Segnier* and came in sight of *Atfia*, a large village at some distance from the Nile; all the valley here was green, the palm groves beautiful, and the Nile deep. Still it was not the prospect that pleases; for the whole ground that was sown, to the sandy ascent of the mountains, was but a narrow strip of three quarters of a mile broad, and the mountains themselves, which here began to have a moderate degree of elevation, and which bounded this narrow valley, were white, gritty, sandy, and uneven, and perfectly destitute of all manner of verdure. As it fell very calm, they came to for the night above *Racca Segnier* where the Nile divides. The *Rais* begged leave to go to *Comadreedly*, a small village on the west bank, as he said, to meet his wife, but as Mr. Bruce imagined to divert himself in the same manner as he had done the night before he left Cairo. He put on his black sartout, his scarlet turban and a new scarlet shawl, both of which he said he had brought to do our traveller honor in his voyage. Mr.

---

Confidence of an Arab in Mr. Bruce.

---

Bruce thanked him for his consideration, but asked, why, as he was a Sherriffe, he did not wear the green turban of Mahomet. That, he replied, was only a trick put upon strangers; many who wore green turbans were very great rascals; but he was a saint, which was better than a Sherriffe and was known as such all over the world whatever colour of turban he wore, or if he had none at all. He promised to be back early in the morning, and to bring with him a fair wind.

They kept, as usual, a very good watch all night, which passed without disturbance. Next day, the 17th, was exceedingly hazy in the morning, though it cleared about ten o'clock. It was, however, sufficient to shew the falsity of the observation of an author, who says, that the Nile emits no fogs; and in the course of the voyage they often saw other examples of the fallacy of this assertion. In the afternoon the people were gone ashore to shoot pigeons, and Mr. Bruce remained on board arranging his journal, when he was surprised by the entrance of a Howadat Arab to whom, at the request of the Shekh, he had promised his protection, and a passage to Kenne in Upper Egypt. This man sat down close to Mr. Bruce, who inquired what he wanted. He would have kissed our traveller's hands, saying, "I am under your protection." He then pulled out a rag from within his girdle, and said that he had saved its contents to carry him to Mecca whither he was going; that one of Hassan's servants had been feeling for his money the night before when he thought him asleep; and that he was afraid the boatmen would rob and throw him into the Nile. This treasure, which amounted to something more than three guineas, he requested Mr. Bruce to keep for him till they should separate. "But what security have you," asked the latter, "that I do not rob you of this and get you thrown into the Nile some night?" "No, no," replied he, "that I know is impossible. I have never

---

The false Pyramid.

---

never been able to sleep since I spoke to you ; do with me what you please, and with my money too ; only keep me out of the hands of those murderers." " Well, well," replied Mr. Bruce, " now you have got rid of your money you are safe, and you shall be my servant ; lie before the door of my dining-room all night ; they dare not hurt a hair of your head while I am alive."

The Pyramids, which had been on their right hand at different distances since they passed the Saccara, terminated here in one of a very singular construction. About two miles from the Nile, between Suf and Woodan, there is a Pyramid, which at first sight appears all of a piece ; it is of unbaked bricks, and perfectly entire : the inhabitants call it the false Pyramid. The lower part is a hill exactly shaped like a Pyramid for a considerable height. Upon this is continued the superstructure in proportion till it terminates like a Pyramid above ; and, at a distance, it would require a good eye to discern the difference, for the face of the stone has a great resemblance to clay, of which the Pyramids of the Saccara are composed.

The 18th, about eight in the morning, they prepared to get on their way ; the wind was calm, and south. Mr. Bruce asked the Rais, who had returned in the night, where the fair wind was which he had promised to bring. He replied that his wife had quarrelled with him all night, and would not give him time to pray ; " therefore," added he with a very droll face, " you shall see me do all that can be done by a saint on this occasion." " What is that !" inquired Mr. Bruce. " Why," replied he, making another droll face, " it is to draw the boat by the rope till the wind turns fair."

After passing Comadree dy, the Nile is again divided by another fragment of the island, and inclines a little to the westward. On the east is the village Sidi Ali el Courani. It has only two palm-trees be-

## Sugar-canes.

longing to it, and on that account a deserted appearance; but the wheat upon the banks was five inches high, and more advanced than any they had yet seen. The mountains on the east side came down to the banks of the Nile, were bare, white, and sandy; and there was on this side no appearance of villages. The river here is about a quarter of a mile broad, or something more. It should seem it was the *Angyrorum Civitas* of Ptolemy; but neither night nor day could Mr. Bruce get an instant for observation, on account of thin white clouds, which confused (for they scarcely could be said to cover) the heavens continually.

They now passed a convent of Cophts, with a small plantation of palms; a miserable building, with a dome like to a saint's or marabout's, and standing quite alone. About four miles farther was the village of Nizelet el Arab, consisting of miserable huts. Here began large plantations of sugar-canes, the first they had yet seen: the people were then loading boats with these to carry them to Cairo. Mr. Bruce procured from them as many as he desired. The canes were about an inch and a quarter in diameter; they were cut in round pieces about three inches long; and, after having been slit, they were steeped in a wooden bowl of water. They gave a very agreeable taste and flavour to it, and make it the most refreshing drink in the world; whilst, by imbibing the water, the canes become more juicy, and lose a part of their heavy clammy sweetness, which would occasion thirst. Our traveller was surprised at finding this plant in such a state of perfection so far to the northward. They were now scarcely arrived in lat. 29°, and nothing could be more beautiful and perfect than these canes.

The origin of sugar, tobacco, red podded or Cayenne pepper, cotton, some species of solanum, indigo, and a multitude of other vegetable productions, has not as yet been well ascertained. Prince Henry of Portugal put his discoveries to immediate profit,

---

---

Crops cultivated along the Nile.

---

---

profit, and communicated what he found new in each part of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, to those places where it was wanting. It will be soon difficult to attribute with certainty to each quarter of the world the articles that belong to it, and fix upon those few that are common to all. Even wheat, the early produce of Egypt, is not a native of that country. It grows under the Line, within the Tropics, and as far north and south as we know. Severe northern winters seem to be necessary to it, and it vegetates vigorously in frost and snow. But whence it came, and in what shape, is yet left to conjecture.

Though the stripe of green wheat was continued all along the Nile, it was interrupted for about half a mile on each side of the Coptic convent. The wretched inhabitants know, that though they may sow, yet, from the violence of the Arabs, they shall never reap, and therefore leave the ground uncultivated. On the side opposite to Sment, the stripe began again, and continued from Sment to Mey Moom, about two miles, and from Mey-Moom to Shenuiah, one mile further. In this small stripe, not above a quarter of a mile broad, besides wheat, clover was sown, which they call Bersine, and cultivate in the same manner as in England. They next passed Boush, a village on the west side of the Nile, two miles south of Shenuiah; and, a little further, Beni Ali, where they saw for a minute the mountains on the right or west of the Nile, running in a line nearly south, and very high. About five miles from Boush is the village of Maniareish on the east side of the river, and here the mountains on that side end. The country all around is well cultivated, and seemed to be of the utmost fertility; the inhabitants were better clothed, and seemingly less miserable and oppressed, than those they left behind in the places near Cairo. The Nile was very shallow at Beni Suef, and the current strong. They touched several times in the middle of the stream, and came to  
anchor

anchor at Baha about a quarter of a mile above Beni Suef, where they passed the night. They were told to keep good watch here all night, that there were troops of robbers on the east side of the water, who had lately plundered some boats, and that the cacheff either durst not, or would not, give them any assistance. They indeed kept strict watch, but saw no robbers, and were no other way molested.

The 18th they had fine weather and a fair wind. Still Mr. Bruce thought the villages were beggarly, and the constant groves of palm trees, so perfectly verdant, did not compensate for the want of sown land, the narrowness of the valley, and barrenness of the mountains. In the course of the day they observed considerable plantations of dates and several of sugar-canes, which the people were just then cutting. At Etfa, on the west side of the Nile, all the houses have receptacles for pigeons on their tops, from which is derived a considerable profit. They are made of earthen pots one above the other, occupying the upper story, and giving the walls of the turrets a lighter and more ornamental appearance. They arrived in the evening at Zohora, about a mile south of Etfa. It consisted of three plantations of dates, five miles from Miniet, and there they passed the night. Next morning the wind was so high that they scarcely could carry their sails; the current was so strong at Shekh Temine, and the violence with which they went through the water was terrible. The Rais told Mr. Bruce, that they should have slackened their sails, if it had not been, that, seeing him curious about the construction of the vessel and her parts, and as they were in no danger of striking, though the water was law, he wanted to shew him what she could do. Mr. Bruce thanked him for his attention, and rallying him on his pretended sanctity continued: "Never fear the banks; for I know that if there is one in the way, you have nothing to do but to bid him be gone, and he will hurry to one side immediately." "I have had



had passengers," replied the Rais, "who would believe that, and more than that, when I told them; but there is no occasion I see to waste much time with you in speaking of miracles."

They passed by a number of villages on the western shore, the eastern seeming to be perfectly unpeopled: first Feshné, a considerable place; then Miniet, a large town, which had been fortified towards the water, at least there were some guns there. A rebel Bey had taken possession of it, and it was usual to stop here, the river being both narrow and rapid; but the Rais was in great spirits, and resolved to hold his wind, as Mr. Bruce had desired him, and nobody made them any signal from shore.

They came to a village called Rhoda, whence they saw the magnificent ruins of the ancient city of Antinous, built by Adrian. Unluckily Mr. Bruce knew nothing of these ruins when he left Cairo, and had taken no pains to provide himself with letters of recommendation as he could easily have done. He asked the Rais what sort of people they were? He said that the town was composed of very bad Turks, very bad Moors, and very bad Christians; that several devils had lately been seen among them, who had been discovered by being better and quieter than the rest. The Nubian geographer informs us, that it was from this town Pharaoh brought his magicians, to compare their powers with those of Moses; an anecdote worthy that great historian.

Our traveller told the Rais, that he must, of necessity, go ashore. He did not seem to be fond of expedition; but hauling in his main-sail, and with his fore-sail full, stood S. S. E. directly under the ruins. In a short time they arrived at the landing place; the banks were low, and they brought up in a kind of bight or small bay, where there was a stake; so the vessel touched very little, or rather swung clear. Abou Cuffi's son Mahomet, and the Arab, went on shore, under pretence of buying some provision,

## Ruins of the city of Antinous.

vision, and to see how the land lay; but after the character they had received of the inhabitants, all their fire arms were brought to the door of the cabin. In the mean time, partly with his naked eye, and partly with his glass, Mr. Bruce was enabled to contemplate the ruins attentively, which filled him with astonishment and admiration. The columns of the angle of the portico were standing fronting to the north, part of the tympanum, cornice, frieze, and architrave, all entire, and very much ornamented: thick trees hid what was behind. The columns were of the largest size, and fluted; the capitals Corinthian, and to all appearance entire. They were probably of white Parian marble; but had lost the extreme whiteness, or polish, of the Antinous at Rome, and were changed to the colour of the fighting gladiator, or rather to a brighter yellow. He saw indistinctly also, a triumphal arch, or gate of the town, in the very same style; and some blocks of very white shining stone, which seemed to be alabaster. Mr. Bruce, and those who remained with him in the boat, were on a sudden alarmed by hearing a violent dispute between the two who went on shore and the inhabitants. Upon this the Rais stripping, slipped off the rope from the stake, and another of the Moors struck a strong perch or pole into the river, and twisted the rope round it. They were in a bight or calm place, so that the stream did not move the boat. Mahomet and the Moor presently came in sight; the people had taken Mahomet's turban from him, and they were apparently on the very worst terms. Mahomet cried to our travellers that the whole town was coming, and getting near the boat, he and the Moor jumped in with great agility. A number of people was assembled, and three shots were fired into the boat, very quickly, one after another. Mr. Bruce cried out in Arabic, "Infidels, thieves, and robbers! come on, or we shall presently attack you;" upon which he immediately fired a ship blunderbuss, with

with small pistol bullets, but with little elevation, among the bushes, so as not to touch them. The three or four men who were nearest fell flat upon their faces, and slid away among the bushes on their bellies, and they saw no more of them. They now put their vessel into the stream, filled their fore-sail and stood off, Mahomet crying, "Be upon your guard, if you are men, we are Sanjack's soldiers, and will come for the turban to night." More they neither heard nor saw.

They were no sooner out of the reach of these people, than the Rais, filling his pipe, and looking very grave, told Mr. Bruce to thank God that he was in the vessel with such a man as himself; as it was owing to this only that he escaped being murdered ashore. "Certainly Hassan," said Mr. Bruce, "under God, the way of escaping from being murdered on land is never to go out of the boat; but don't you think that my blunderbuss was as effectual a protection as your holiness? Tell me Mahomet, what did they do to you?" He said, they had not seen the boat come in, but had heard of them ever since they were at Metraheny, and had waited to rob or murder them; that upon now hearing they were come, they had all run to their houses for their arms, and were coming down immediately to plunder the boat; upon which he and the Moor ran off, and being met by these three people, and the boy, on the road, who had nothing in their hands, one of them snatched the turban off. He likewise added, that there were two parties in the town; one in favour of Ali Bey, the other friendly to a rebel Bey who had taken Miniét; that they had fought two or three days ago among themselves, and were going to fight again, each of them having summoned Arabs to their assistance. Hassan and his son Mahomet were violently exasperated, and nothing would serve them but to go in again near the shore, and fire all the guns and blunderbusses among the people. But

## Ashmounein.

besides that Mr. Bruce had no inclination of that kind, he was very loth to frustrate the attempts of some future traveller, who might add this to the great remains of architecture already preserved by the pencil.

At Reremont there are a great number of Persian wheels, to draw the water for the sugar canes, which belong to Christiãns. The water thus brought up from the river runs down to the plantations, below or behind the town, after being emptied on the banks above ; a proof that here the descent from the mountains is not an optic fallacy, as a former writer has asserted.

They passed Ashmounein, probably the ancient Latopolis, a large town, which gives name to the province, where there are magnificent ruins of Egyptian architecture,\* and afterwards came to Malawe, larger,

\* M. Savary gives the following remarkable account of them :

The village of Ashmounein, four miles to the north of Melaoui, is remarkable for the ruins it contains. Amongst the heaps of rubbish it is surrounded with, you admire a superb portico, that has suffered nothing from time. It is one hundred feet long, twenty-five wide, and is supported by twelve columns, which have only a plain fascia by way of capital. Each column is composed of three blocks of granite, forming in all sixty feet in height, by twenty-five in circumference. The block which rests upon the base is simply rounded, and loaded with hieroglyphics, which commence with a Pyramid. The two others are fluted. The columns are ten feet distant from each other, except the two middle ones, which, serving for the entrance, leave between them an interval of fifteen feet. Ten enormous stones cover the whole extent of the portico. Over them is a double row. The two middle ones, which rise in the form of a pediment, surpass the others in height and thickness. You are struck with astonishment at the sight of these masses of rocks that the art of man has found means to elevate to the height of sixty feet. The frieze which goes round it is covered with hieroglyphics very well carved. We see the figures of birds, of insects, of men seated, to whom others seem to make offerings, and different sorts of animals. This is probably the history of the time, the place, and the deity in whose honour this monument was raised. The portico was painted red and blue. These colours are effaced in many places; but the lower part of the architrave, which surrounds the colonnade, has preserved a gold colour astonishingly lively. It is the same with the ceiling, where the stars of gold shine upon an azure

Melawé.

larger, better built, and better inhabited, than Ashmounein, the residence of the Cacheff. Mahomet Aga was there at that time with troops from Cairo; he had taken Miniet, and, by the friendship of Shekh Hamam, the great Arab governor of Upper Egypt, he kept all the people on that side of the river in allegiance to Ali Bey.

Our traveller went on shore; but was not fortunate enough to meet with Mahomet Aga, to whom he had been recommended while at Cairo by Risk. He received however from an old Greek, a servant of Mahomet's, about a gallon of brandy, and a jar of lemons and oranges, preserved in honey; both very agreeable; likewise a lamb, and some garden stuff. Among the sweetmeats was some horse-radish preserved like ginger, which certainly, though it might be

azure sky with a dazzling brilliancy. This monument, constructed before the conquest of the Persians, has neither the elegance, nor the purity of the Grecian architecture; but its solidity, which it seems impossible to destroy, its awful simplicity, and its majesty, command admiration. What ideas must we entertain of the temple, or the palace, of which this announced the entry? I will confess that one cannot but be greatly surprised at finding amidst Arabian and Turkish huts, edifices which seem to have been the works of Genii. Their antiquity adds to their estimation. Escaped from the ravages of destructive conquerors, stamped with the impression of ages, they impose a sort of veneration on the contemplating traveller. The modern Egyptians behold with indifference these beautiful remains of antiquity, and suffer them to subsist, only because it would be too expensive to destroy them. Superstition and ignorance lead them to imagine, that they contain treasures; accordingly, they do not permit travellers to take a faithful drawing of them. One exposes one's life in making the attempt. I shall relate to you what happened to Father Sicard whilst he was admiring the beauty of the portico of Ashmounein. "Light not your censer," says the Arab his conductor gravely to him, "for fear we should be surprised in the fact, and that we suffer for it."—"What do you mean? I have neither censer, nor fire, nor incense."—"You laugh at me; a stranger like you would not come here merely from curiosity.—And what then?—I know that by your skill you are acquainted with the place where the great chest full of gold is hid, which our fathers left us. If your censer was seen, it would soon be imagined that you came here to open our chest by your magic words, and carry off our treasure."

wholesome, was the very worst stuff ever tasted. Mr. Bruce gave a good square piece of it, well wrapped in honey, to the Rais, who coughed and spit half an hour after, crying he was poisoned.

They passed Mollé, a small village with a great number of acacia trees intermixed with the plantations of palms. These occasion a pleasing variety, not only from the difference of the shape of the tree, but also from the colour and diversity of the green. As the sycamore in Lower Egypt, so the acacia seems to be the only tree indigenous in the Thebaid. It is the *Acacia vera*, or *Spina Egyptiaca*, bearing a round yellow flower. From the male, called Saiel, is procured the Gum Arabic upon incision with an axe. The gum chiefly comes from Arabia Petraea, where these trees are most numerous. The acacia is, however, an inhabitant of all the deserts from the northernmost part of Arabia to the extremity of Ethiopia; and its leaves afford the only food for camels travelling through those desolate regions.

On the 20th, early in the morning, they again set sail and passed several villages, till at length they reached Siout, where the wind turned directly south; so they were obliged to stay at Tima the rest of the 20th, where Mr. Bruce went on shore. It is a small town, surrounded, like the rest, with groves of palm trees. The Nile is here full of sandy islands. Those that the inundation first leaves are all sown, and are chiefly on the east. The others on the west were barren and uncultivated; all of them mostly composed of sand.

The 21st, in the morning, they came to Gawa, where is the second scene of ruins of Egyptian architecture, after leaving Cairo. Mr. Bruce immediately went on shore, and found a small temple of three columns in front, with the capitals intire, and the columns in several separate pieces. They seemed by that, and their slight proportions, to be of the most modern of that species of building; but the whole

Achmim.

were covered with hieroglyphics, the old story over again, the hawk and the serpent, the man sitting with the dog's head, with the perch, or measuring rod; in one hand, the hemisphere and globes with wing's, and leaves of the banata tree, as is supposed, in the other. The temple is filled with rubbish and dung of cattle, which the Arabs drive hither to shelter them from the heat.

On the 22d, at night, they arrived at Achmim. Mr. Bruce landed with his quadrant and instruments, with a view of observing an eclipse of the moon; but, immediately after her rising, clouds and mist so effectually covered the whole heavens, that it was not even possible to catch a star of any size passing the meridian. Achmim is a considerable place\*. The inhabitants

\* I cannot leave Achmim, says M. Savary, without telling you of a serpent which is the wonder of the country. Upwards of a century ago a religious Turk, call Schiek Haridi, died here. He passed for a saint among the Mahometans. They raised a monument to him, covered with a copula, at the foot of the mountain. The people flocked from all parts to offer up their prayers to him. One of their priests, adroitly profiting by their credulity, persuaded them that God had made the soul of Scheik Haridi pass into the body of a serpent. Many of these are found in the Thebais, which are harmless. He had taught one to obey his voice. He appeared with his serpent, dazzled the vulgar by his surprising tricks, and pretended to cure all disorders. Some lucky instances of success due to nature alone, and sometimes to the imagination of the patients, gave him great celebrity. He soon confined his serpent Haridi to the tomb, producing him only to oblige princes, and persons capable of giving him a handsome recompense. The successors of this priest, brought up in the same principles, found no difficulty in giving sanction to so advantageous an error. They added to the general persuasion of his virtue, that of his immortality. They had the boldness even to make a public proof of it. The serpent was cut in pieces in presence of the Emir, and placed for two hours under a vase. At the instant of lifting up the vase, the priests, no doubt, had the address to substitute one exactly resembling it. A miracle was proclaimed, and the immortal Haridi acquired a fresh degree of consideration. This knavery procures them great advantages. The people flock from all quarters to pray at this tomb; and if the serpent crawls out from under the stone, and approaches the suppliant, it is a sign that his malady will be cured. You may imagine, that he does not appear till an offering has been made proportioned

## Achmim.

inhabitants are of a very sallow sickly appearance, probably owing to the bad air occasioned by a dirty calish that passes through the town. Here is a convent of Franciscans for the entertainment of converts or persecuted Christians from Nubia, for which one of the last princes of the munificent house of Medicis offered to provide an observatory completely furnished with the necessary instruments; but the religious refused the favor, under the pretext that they were afraid of giving umbrage to the natives, but in reality, as Mr. Bruce conceived, lest it should expose their own ignorance and idleness. At the period of his visit they were all Italians of the lower class, some of them having been barbers and tailors at Milan, and lived in great ease and security through the favor and protection of the Arab prince Hamam Shekh of Furskout. In the town there was also a manufactory of coarse cotton cloth; and great quantities of poultry, esteemed the best in Egypt, are bred here, and sent to Cairo. The whole of the neighbouring country is sown with wheat, and produces very large crops. Abundance of an excellent species of fish called *binny* is caught here; some these grow to the length of four feet, and are a foot and a half broad. The women of Achmim seldom marry after sixteen, and Mr. Bruce saw several in a state of pregnancy who assured him that they were not eleven years old. This precocity, however, is most pernicious to beauty, for we are told that these females at sixteen look older than many English women at sixty.

Achmim

tioned to the quality and riches of the different persons. In extraordinary cases, where the sick person cannot be cured without the presence of the serpent, a pure virgin must come to solicit him. To avoid inconveniences on this head, they take care to choose a very young girl indeed. She is decked out in her best clothes, and crowned with flowers. She puts herself in a praying attitude, and as the priests are inclined, the serpent comes out, makes circles round the young suppliant, and goes and reposes on her. The virgin, accompanied by a vast multitude, carries him in triumph, amidst the general acclamation.



## Dendera.

Achmim is conjectured to be the Panopolis of the ancients, not only from its situation, but also from the inscription on a very large triumphal arch, a few hundred yards from the convent. It was erected by the emperor Nero, is built with marble, and dedicated in a Greek inscription ΠΑΝΙΘΕΩΝ. The columns that were in front are broken and removed; and the arch itself either sunk into the ground, or overthrown on the side with little separation of the different parts.

The 24th of December, they left Achmim, and came to the village Shekh Ali on the west, two miles and a quarter distant. They then passed Hamdi, and several other villages; and the next morning, the 25th, impatient to visit the greatest and most magnificent scene of ruins in Upper Egypt, they set out from Baliani, and, about ten o'clock in the forenoon, arrived at Dendera. Although they had heard that the people of this place were the very worst in Egypt, they were not very apprehensive. They had two letters from the Bey, to two principal men there, commanding them, as they would answer with their lives and fortunes, to have a special care that no mischief befel these visitors; and likewise a very pressing letter to Shekh Hamam at Furshout, in whose territory they were.

Dendera is a considerable town at this day, all covered with thick groves of palm trees, the same that Juvenal describes it to have been in his time. A mile south of the town are ruins of two temples, one of which is so much buried under ground, that little of it is to be seen; but the other, which is by far the most magnificent, is entire, and accessible on every side. It is also covered with hieroglyphics, both within and without, all in relief; and of every figure, simple and compound, that ever has been published, or called an hieroglyphic. The form of the building is an oblong square, the ends of which are occupied by two large apartments, or vestibules, supported by monstrous columns, all covered with hieroglyphics likewise.

## Ruins of Dendera.

likewise. Some are in form of men and beasts: some seem to be the figures of instruments of sacrifice, while others, in a smaller size, and less distinct form, seem to be inscriptions in the current hand of hieroglyphics. They are all finished with care. The capitals are of one piece, and consist of four huge human heads, placed back to back against one another, with bat's ears, and an ill-imagined, and worse executed, fold drapery between them. Above these is a large oblong square block, still larger than the capitals, with four flat fronts, disposed like pannels, that is, with a kind of square border round the edges, while the faces and fronts are filled with hieroglyphics, as are the walls and ceilings of every part of the temple. Between these two apartments in the extremities, there are three others, resembling the first, in every respect, except that they are smaller. The whole building is of common white stone, from the neighboring mountains, only those two, in which have been sunk the piers for hanging the outer doors, (for it seems they had doors even in those days) are of granite, or black and blue porphyry. The top of the temple is flat; the spouts to carry off the water are monstrous heads of sphinxes; the globes with wings, and the two serpents, with a kind of shield or breast-plate between, are here frequently repeated, such as we see them on the Carthaginian medals. The hieroglyphics have been painted over, and great part of the colouring yet remains upon the stones, red, in all its shades, especially that dark dusky colour called Tyrian purple; yellow, very fresh; sky-blue (that is, near the blue of an eastern sky, several shades lighter than ours); green of different shades; these are all the colours preserved.

A little before our traveller came to Dendera, he saw the first crocodile, and afterwards hundreds, lying upon every island, like large flocks of cattle; yet the inhabitants of Dendera drive their beasts of every kind into the river, and they stand there for hours.

hours. The girls and women too, that come to fetch water in jars, stand up to their knees in the water for a considerable time; and if we may guess by what happens, their danger is full as little as their fear, for none of them, that ever our traveller heard of had been bitten by a crocodile.

Mr. Bruce having rewarded those who had conducted him to the ruins, returned to the tent. He saw at some distance, a well-dressed man, with a white turban and yellow shawl covering it, and a number of ill-looking people about him; but, supposing it was some quarrel among the natives, took no notice of it. The Rais however told him, that a begging fellow, who called himself a saint—"but," added he, "it is the Cadi, and no one else," insisted upon taking away the boat. Our traveller now went to see him: he was sitting upon the ground, on a carpet moving his head backwards and forwards, and saying prayers with beads in his hands. On Mr. Bruce's saluting him, he beheld him with great contempt.—"I am (said he) going to Gurge, and this holy saint is with me, and there is no boat but your's bound that way; for which reason I have promised to take him with me." The pretended saint had now got into the boat; he was an ill-favoured sickly man, and seemed almost blind. Mr Bruce, however, told him that he was not going to Gurge, nor should either saints or cadis accompany him; then returning to his tent, he sent the Rais with half-a-crown (as in charity,) which the saint cheerfully accepted, and went his way singing. The cadi also departed, and the mob dispersed. A Moor was now ordered to proclaim: "That all people should, in the night-time, keep away from the tent, or they would be fired at."

While they were striking their tent a great mob came down, but without the cadi. As Mr. Bruce commanded his people to take their arms in their hands, they kept at a considerable distance; however, the pretended saint got into the boat again, with a yel-

low flag in his hand, and sat down at the foot of the main-mast, saying, with a vacant smile, "That they might fire, for he was out of the reach of the shot." —Some stones were thrown, but fell short of the boat. Hereupon Mr. Bruce ordered two of his servants, with large brass ship-blunderbusses, to get upon the top of the cabin. He then pointed a wide-mouthed Swedish blunderbuss from a window, threatening to fire if another stone was thrown. As soon as the blunderbuss appeared the assailants all ran away, and before they could collect themselves to return, the vessel was in the middle of the stream. The saint, who had been singing all this while, now began to shew some apprehensions. They carried him about a mile up the river, when, having approached a landing-place, Mr. Bruce asked him if he would go ashore of his own accord, or be thrown into the Nile? then ordering him to be put out, the saint, who he supposed was blind and weak, placed one foot upon the gunnel of the boat, then within three feet of the shore, and leaped upon land. They then slacked their vessel down the stream a few yards, filling their sails and stretching away, while the saint, apparently the tool of the *cadi*, remained cursing, blaspheming, and using gestures expressive of the most violent rage.

Having arrived the same afternoon at Furshout, Mr. Bruce visited a convent of Italian friars, who, like those at Achmin, are of the order of the reformed Franciscans. Furshout is in a large cultivated plain, nine miles over to the foot of the mountains, all sown with wheat. Here are likewise plantations of sugar-canes. It is said that the town contains above 10,000 people.

Our traveller waited upon the Shekh Hamam, a large handsome man, about sixty. He was dressed in a large fox-skin pelisse over the rest of his clothes, and had a yellow Indian shawl wrapt about his head like a turban. He received Mr. Bruce with great politeness,

## Furshout.

politeness, asking him more about Cairo than about Europe.—This man was immensely rich, having gradually united in his own person all the separate districts of Upper Egypt, each of which formerly had its particular prince. His interest was so great at Constantinople as to create great jealousy among the beys of Cairo. He had on farm, from the Grand Signior, almost the whole country between Siout and Syene. Mr. Bruce was likewise received in the most flattering manner by Ishmael nephew of Shekh Hamam, at the neighbouring town of Bâdjoura, with whom he passed several days.

While Mr. Bruce was at Furshout, there happened a very extraordinary phænomenon. It rained the whole night, and till about nine o'clock next morning; when the people began to be very apprehensive lest the whole town should be destroyed. It is a perfect prodigy to see rain here; and the prophets said it portended a dissolution of government, which was justly verified soon afterwards, and at that time indeed was extremely probable.

The 7th of January 1769, early in the morning, Mr. Bruce left Furshout. He had not hired the boat farther than that place; but the good terms which subsisted between him and the saint, his Rais, made an accommodation very easy. He now agreed for 4l. to carry them to Seyne and down again; but, if he behaved well, he expected a trifling premium. "And if you behave ill Hassan," said Mr. Bruce, "what do you think you deserve?"—"To be hanged," replied he, "I deserve, and desire no better."

The wind at first was but scant; however, it freshened up towards noon, when they passed a large town called How, on the west side of the Nile. About four o'clock in the afternoon they arrived at El Gourni, a small village, a quarter of a mile distant from the Nile. It has in it a temple of old Egyptian architecture. Mr. Bruce thinks, that this, and the two

## Ruins at El Gourri.

adjoining heaps of ruins, which are at the same distance from the Nile, probably might have been part of the ancient Thebes. Here are two colossal statues in a sitting posture, covered with hieroglyphics. The southern is of stone and entire, but the other a good deal mutilated. The former has a very remarkable head-dress, which Mr. Bruce could compare to nothing but a tye-wig, such as is worn at the present day. These statues, placed in a very fertile spot belonging to Thebes, were apparently the Nilometers of that town, as the marks left by the water upon their bases would seem to indicate. The bases of both are bare to the bottom of the plinth, which disproves the imaginary rise of the soil of Egypt by the Nile, in which case the statues must have been at least half covered in the space of more than three thousand years that they have stood here. They are covered with inscriptions in Greek and Latin, importing that certain travellers heard Memnon's statue utter the sound which it was said to do on being struck with the sun's rays. Nothing remains of ancient Thebes, but four prodigious temples, all of them in appearance more ancient, but neither so entire, nor so magnificent, as those of Dendera. The temples at Medinet Tabu are the most elegant of these. The hieroglyphics are cut to the depth of half-a-foot, in some places; but we have still the same figures, or rather a less variety, than at Dendera.

A number of robbers, who much resemble our gypsies, live in the holes of the mountains above Thebes. They are all outlaws, and punished with death if elsewhere found. Osman Bey, an ancient governor of Girge, unable to suffer any longer the disorders committed by these people, ordered a quantity of dried faggots to be brought together, and, with his soldiers, took possession of the face of the mountain, where the greatest number of these wretches were. He then ordered all their caves to be filled with this dry brushwood, to which he set fire, so that most of them were destroyed;

## Sepulchres of Thebes.

destroyed: but they have since recruited their numbers, without changing their manners.

About half a mile north of El Gourni, are the magnificent and stupendous sepulchres of Thebes. The mountains of the Thebaid come close behind the town; they are not connected with each other in ridges, but stand insulated upon their bases; so that you can get round each of them. A hundred of these, it is said, are excavated into sepulchral, and a variety of other apartments. Through seven of these Mr. Bruce went with great fatigue. In the first that he entered he saw the prodigious sarcophagus, according to some of Menes, or, as others assert, of Osimandyas. It is sixteen feet high, ten long, and six broad, and of one single piece of red granite. Its cover broken on one side, was still upon it, and had on the outside a figure in relief. From the outer entry our traveller descended through an inclined passage about twenty feet broad, the sides as well as the roof of which were covered with a coat of the finest stucco. Here he was not a little surprised by the discovery of several paintings in fresco. In one pannel were several musical instruments chiefly of the hautboy kind, strewed upon the ground, and also some simple pipes or flutes, together with several jars apparently of potters' ware, which having their mouths covered with parchment or skin, and being braced on the side like a drum, probably formed the instrument called the tabor. In three other pannels were painted the same number of harps, which seemed to deserve particular attention, both for the elegance of those instruments in their form, and the reflection which necessarily arises, to how great a perfection music must have attained before an artist could produce so complete an instrument. On one of these harps a man was represented playing. He seems to be about sixty years old, and of a complexion rather dark for an Egyptian, without beard or mustachoes. He is dressed in a loose shirt, such as is worn at this day in Nubia,

(only

(only it is not blue) with loose sleeves. It appears to be thick muslin or cotton cloth; and a crimson stripe, about one eighth of an inch broad, runs through it longitudinally. This shirt reaches down to his ankle, and his feet are without sandals. Judging from the proportion of the human figure, the extreme length of the harp may be estimated at something less than six feet and a half. This instrument is of a much more advantageous form than the triangular Grecian harp. It has thirteen strings: the back part is the sounding-board composed of four thin pieces of wood, joined together in the form of a cone, The bottom and sides of the frame seem to be finereed and inlaid, probably with ivory, tortoise-shell, and mother-of-pearl, the ordinary produce of the neighbouring seas and deserts.

A man habited like the former was playing on the second harp, which had eighteen strings; and differed essentially in form and distribution of its parts from that already described, but without losing any of its elegance.

Mr. Bruce had taken drawings of these instruments, and was preparing to proceed farther in his researches, when his conductors, who had before shewn signs of discontent, could no longer be restrained, and dashing their torches against the largest harp, left our traveller and his attendants to find their way out of the cave in the dark. The fear of a visit from the banditti, who inhabit the caverns above Medinet Tabu, was the occasion of this conduct; and the same apprehension also urged the departure of Mr. Bruce, who, after a rencounter with some of those outlaws, whom he escaped by favour of the darkness, reached the boat in safety.

As Thebes exhibits not the appearance of ever having had walls, Mr. Bruce conjectures that the story of its hundred gates may have originated from the hundred mountains excavated and adorned, which



were probably its greatest curiosities, and are still denominated the *ports* or *gates* of the kings.

They next came to Luxor and Carnac, which is a mile and a quarter below it. Here are by far the largest and most magnificent scenes of ruins in Egypt, much more extensive and stupendous than those of Thebes and Dendera put together. Among these are two obelisks of great beauty, and in good preservation: they are smaller than those at Rome, but not at all mutilated. The pavement, which is made to receive the shadow, is to this day so horizontal, that it might still be used in observation.

At Carnac Mr. Bruce saw the remains of two vast rows of sphinxes, one on the right-hand, the other on the left, (their heads mostly broken) and, a little lower, a number as it should seem of termini. They were composed of basalt, with a dog or lion's heads, of Egyptian sculpture. These likewise stood in lines, as if intended as an avenue to some principal building. Upon the outside of the walls, at Carnac and Luxor, there seems to be an historical engraving instead of hieroglyphics; this our travellers had not met with before. It is a representation of men, horses, chariots, and battles; some of the attitudes are well drawn, but rudely scratched upon the surface of the stone. The weapons, the men make use of, are short javelins. There is also, distinguished among the rest, the figure of a man on horseback, with a lion fighting furiously by him. The whole composition is worthy the traveller's attention.

On the 17th, our travellers left Luxor, and sailed with a very fair wind, and in great spirits. In the evening, they came to an anchor on the eastern shore nearly opposite to Esne. They passed over to Esne next morning. It is the ancient Latopolis, and has very great remains, particularly a large temple, which, though the whole of it is of the remotest antiquity, seems to have been built at different times, or rather out of the ruins of different antient buildings.

ings. The hieroglyphics upon it are very ill executed, and not painted. The town is the residence of an Arab Shekh, and the inhabitants are a very bad sort of people; but as Mr. Bruce was dressed like an Arab, they did not molest, because they did not know him.

On the 18th, they left Esne, and passed the town of Edfu, where there are likewise considerable remains of Egyptian architecture.

The wind failing, they were obliged to stop in a very poor, desolate, and dangerous part of the Nile, called Jibbel el Silfelly, where a boom, or chain, was drawn across the river, to hinder, as is supposed, the Nubian boats from committing piratical practices in Egypt lower down the stream. About noon, Mr. Bruce passed Coom Ombo, a round building like a castle, and then arrived at Daroo, a miserable mansion, unconscious that, some years after, he should be indebted to that paltry village for the man who was to guide him through the desert, and restore him to his native country and friends.

The next place to which Mr. Bruce came was Shekh Ammer, the encampment of the Ababde Arabs, a collection of villages composed of miserable huts, containing about a thousand effective men. Our traveller had been acquainted, at Badjoura, with Ibrahim the son of the chief of this tribe, who applied to him for the medicines for his father, and Mr. Bruce had promised to call upon him to learn their effect. Ibrahim received him in the most friendly manner, and after Mr. Bruce had partaken of a great dinner, he was introduced to the Shekh. This chief, called Nimmer, or *the tiger*, was about sixty years of age, and extremely tormented with the gravel. He was lying in the corner of a hut, upon a carpet, with a cushion under his head. After some conversation Mr. Bruce said: "Now after the drugs which I sent you by Ibrahim, tell me, and tell me truly upon the faith of an Arab, would your people, if they met me  
in

---

 Interview with an Arab chief.
 

---

in the desert do me any harm, especially now that I have eaten and drunk with you to day?" Nimmer on this raised himself upright on his carpet, and a more ghastly figure our traveller had never beheld. "No," said he "cursed be those men of my people or others that shall ever lift up their hand against you, either in the *Desert* or the *Tell*," that is, the cultivated part of Egypt. Mr. Bruce now asked his opinion respecting an attempt to penetrate that way into Abyssinia, but was advised by all means to go by way of Cossier and Jidda. The principal people of the tribe had by this time assembled in the hut, which they completely filled, and joining hands, repeated a kind of prayer which lasted about two minutes, and by which they declared themselves and their children accursed, if ever they lifted their hands against our traveller, or in case he or his should flee to them for refuge, if they did not protect them at the risk of their lives, their families, and fortunes, or as they emphatically expressed it, to the death of the last male child among them.

On the 20th, they sailed with a favourable wind till about an hour before sun-rise, and about nine o'clock came to an anchor on the south end of the palm groves, and north end of the town of Syene, nearly opposite to an island in which there is a small handsome Egyptian temple, pretty entire. It is the temple of Cnuphis, where formerly was the Nilometer.

Adjoining to the palm trees was a very good comfortable house, belonging to Hussein Schourbatchie, the man that used to be sent from that place to Cairo, to receive the pay of the janissaries in garrison at Syene, upon whom too Mr. Bruce had credit for a small sum. Here he obtained an interview with the Aga, who furnished him with his own horse and mules, and asses for his servants, for the purpose of visiting the neighbouring cataract of the Nile.

They passed out at the south gate of the town, into

the first small sandy plain. A very little to the left there are a number of tomb-stones, with inscriptions in the Cufic character, which travellers have erroneously called an unknown language and letters, although it was the only letter and language known to Mahomet, and the most learned of the sect in the first ages. After passing the tomb-stones without the gate, they came to a plain about five miles long, bordered on the left by a hill of no considerable height, and sandy like the plain, upon which are seen some ruins, more modern than the Egyptian buildings already described. They seem indeed to be a mixture of all kinds and ages.

The distance from the gate of the town to Termissi, or Marada, small villages on the cataract, is exactly six English miles. After the description tready given of this cataract in some authors, a traveller has reason to be surprised, when arrived on its banks, to find that vessels sail up the cataract, and consequently the fall cannot be so violent as to deprive people of hearing.

The bed of the river, occupied by the water, was not then half a mile broad. It is divided into a number of small channels, by large blocks of granite, from thirty to forty feet high. The current, confined for a long course between the rocky mountains of Nubia, tries to expand itself with great violence. Finding in every part before it, opposition from the rocks of granite, and forced back by these, it meets the opposite currents. The chafing of the water against these huge obstacles, and the meeting of the contrary currents, create such a violent ebullition, and occasion such a noise and disturbed appearance, that it fills the mind with confusion, rather than terror.

On the 22d, 23d, and 24th of January, our travellers being at Syene, in a house immediately east of the small island in the Nile, by a mean of three ob-

† servations

180,  
of h



The British Expedition to the East Indies in the Year 1801

---

Mr. Bruce sets out with a caravan for Kenne.

---

servations of the sun in the meridian, Mr. Bruce concluded the latitude of Syene to be  $24^{\circ} 0' 48''$ .

On the 26th he again embarked; and having called by the way on his patient Nimmer, Shekh of the Ababde, returned on the 2d of February to Badjoura, whence he was to proceed to Kenne.

As he was now about to launch into that part of his expedition, in which he was to have no further intercourse with Europe, Mr. Bruce set himself to work to examine all his observations, and put his journal in such forwardness by explanations, where needful, that the labours and pains he had hitherto been at might not be totally lost to the public, if he should perish in the journey he had undertaken, which, every day, from all information he could procure, appeared to be more and more desperate. Having finished these, at least so far as to make them intelligible to others, he conveyed them to his friends at Cairo, to remain in their custody till he should return, or news arrivè that he was otherwise disposed of.

On Thursday the 16th of February 1796, Mr. Bruce set out with a caravan for Kenne, the Cæne Emporium of antiquity. All the way from Kenne, close to their left, were desert hills, on which not the least verdure grew, but a few plants of a large species of solanum, called burrumbuc. At half past two they came to a well, called Bir Ambar, (the well of spices,) and a dirty village of the same name, belonging to the Azaizy, a poor inconsiderable tribe of Arabs. They live by letting out their cattle for hire to the caravans that go to Cossier, and attending themselves when necessary. Their houses are of very particular construction, if they can be called houses. They are all made of potters-clay, in one piece, in shape of a bee-hive; the largest is not above ten feet high, and the greatest diameter six.—There are now no vestiges of any canal, mentioned to have been cut between the Nile and the Red Sea.—The cultivated land

---

The caravan described—Journey through the desert.

---

here is not above half a mile in extent from the river, but the inundation of the Nile reaches much higher, nor as it left behind it any appearance of soil.

On the 17th, at eight o'clock in the morning, Mr. Bruce's servants being all mounted on horseback, and having taken the charge of their own camels, (for there was a confusion in the caravan not to be described, and the guards they knew were but a set of thieves,) they advanced slowly into the desert. There were about two hundred men on horseback, armed with firelocks; all of them lions, if you believed their word or appearance; but our travellers were credibly informed, that fifty of the Arabs, at first sight, would have made these heroes fly without any bloodshed. The caravan had not proceeded two miles before Mr. Bruce was joined by the Howadat Arab, whom he had brought with him in the boat from Cairo. He offered his service to our traveller with great professions of gratitude, hoping that he would again take charge of his money, and now for the first time mentioned his name, which was Mahomet Abd-el-Gin, "the slave of the Devil or Spirit."

Our travellers' road lay all the way through an open plain, bounded by hillocks of sand, and fine gravel, perfectly hard, and not perceptibly above the level of the plain country of Egypt. About twelve miles distant there is a ridge of mountains of no considerable height, perhaps the most barren in the world. Between these their road lay through plains, never three miles broad, but without trees, shrubs, or herbs. There are not even the traces of any living creature, neither serpent nor lizard, antelope nor ostrich, the usual inhabitants of the most dreary deserts. There is no sort of water on the surface, brackish or sweet. Even the birds seem to avoid the place as pestilential, not one being seen of any kind so much as flying over. The sun was burning hot, and, upon rubbing two sticks together, in half a minute they both took fire, and flamed; a mark how near the country was reduced



---

Twenty Turks join the caravan.

---

to a general conflagration ! At half past three, they pitched their tent near some draw-wells, which, upon tasting, they found bitterer, than soot. They had, indeed, other water carried by the camels in skins. This well-water had only one needful quality, it was cold, and therefore very comfortable for refreshing them outwardly. This unpleasant station is called Legeta ; here they were obliged to pass the night, and all next day to wait the arrival of the caravan of Cus, Esne, and part of those of Kenne and Ebanout.

In the evening came twenty Turks from Caramania, which is that part of Asia Minor immediately on the side of the Mediterranean opposite to the coast of Egypt ; all of them neatly and cleanly dressed like Turks, all on camels, armed with swords, a pair of pistols at their girdle, and a short neat gun ; their arms were in very good order, with their flints and ammunition stowed in cartridge-boxes, in a very soldier-like manner. A few of these spoke Arabic, and Mr. Bruce's Greek servant, Michael, interpreted for the rest. Having been informed, that the large tent belonged to an Englishman, they came into it without ceremony. They told Mr. Bruce, that they were a number of neighbours and companions, who had set out together to go to Mecca to the Hadje ; and not knowing the language or customs of the people, they had been but indifferently used since they landed at Alexandria, particularly somewhere about Achmim ; that one of the Owam, or swimming thieves, had been on board of them in the night, and had carried off a small portmanteau with about 200 sequins in gold ; that, though a complaint had been made to the Bey of Girge, yet no satisfaction had been obtained ; and that now they had heard an Englishman was here, whom they reckoned their countryman, they had come to propose, that they should make a common cause to defend each other against all enemies.—What they meant by countryman was this :—There is in Asia  
Minor,

---

The Turks attach themselves to Mr. Bruce.

---

Minor, somewhere between Anatolia, and Caramania, a district which they call *Caz Dagli*, and this, the Turks believe, was the country from which the English first drew their origin; and on this account they never fail to claim kindred with the English wherever they meet, especially if they stand in need of their assistance. These Turks seemed to be above the middling rank of people; each of them had his little cloak-bag very neatly packed up, and they gave me to understand that there was money in it. These they placed in Mr. Bruce's servants' tent, and chained them all together, round the middle pillar of it; for it was easy to see that the Arabs of the caravan had these packages in view, from the first moment of the Turks' arrival.

Mr. Bruce received extraordinary pleasure from finding the character of his country so firmly established among nations so distant, enemies to our religion, and strangers to our government. Turks from Mount Taurus, and Arabs from the desert of Libya, thought themselves unsafe among their own countrymen, but trusted their lives and their little fortunes implicitly to the direction and word of an Englishman whom they had never before seen.

They staid all the 18th at *Legeta*, waiting for the junction of the caravans, and departed the 19th at six o'clock in the morning. Their journey, all that day, was through a plain, never less than a mile broad, and never broader than three; the hills, on their right and left, were higher than the former, and of a brownish calcined colour, like the stones on the sides of Mount Vesuvius, but without any herb or tree upon them. At half past ten, they passed a mountain of green and red marble, and at twelve they entered a plain called *Hamra*, where they first observed the sand red, with a purple cast, of the colour of porphyry; and this is the signification of *Hamra*, the name of the valley. A curious circumstance which they remarked was, that the ants, the only living creatures

---

Mountains of porphyry and marble.

---

creatures which they had yet seen here, were all of a beautiful red colour like the sand.

Mr. Bruce dismounted here, to examine of what the rocks were composed; and found that here began the quarries of porphyry, without the mixture of any other stone; but it was imperfect, brittle, and soft. He had not been engaged in this pursuit an hour, before he was alarmed with a report that the Atouni had attacked the rear of the caravan; he was at the head of it. The Turks and his servants were all drawn together, at the foot of the mountain, and posted as advantageously as possible. But it soon appeared, that they were some thieves only, who had attempted to steal some loads of corn from camels that were weak, or fallen lame, perhaps in intelligence with those of their own caravans.

On the 20th, at six o'clock in the morning, they left Main el Mafarek, where they had passed the night, and, at ten, came to the mouth of the defiles. At eleven they began to descend, having had a very imperceptible ascent from Kenne all the way.

They encamped at night at Koraim; and hence they departed early in the morning, and, at ten o'clock, passed several defiles, perpetually alarmed by a report, that the Arabs were approaching; none of whom they ever saw.

The travellers then proceeded through a long plain at the end of which they came to a mountain, chiefly composed of the marble called *verde antico*, but by far the most beautiful of the kind that Mr. Bruce had ever seen. They had afterwards mountains of a species of granite on either side as far as Mesagel Terfowey, where they encamped at noon. Mr. Bruce went with his camel-drivers to procure water, which is not supplied by springs, but lies in cavities in the rock about five miles from their encampment. Here he shot two antelopes, and it was near midnight before the party returned with the game and water. They were surprised to find the tents all lighted, which

---

Detection of a thief in the caravan.

---

which at so late an hour was unusual, and the Arabs parading around them in arms. Soon after the Howadat Arab came with a messenger from Sidi Hassan, the conductor of the caravan, desiring that Mr. Bruce would instantly repair to his tent; but he excused himself from going, on account of fatigue, and the unseasonableness of the hour. On enquiring he found that while his people were asleep, two men had got into their tent, where he had allowed the Turks for security to deposit their baggage, and attempted to steal one of their portmanteaus; but as these were chained together, and the tent-pole in the middle, the noise had awakened the servants, who seized one of the depredators. The Turks would have dispatched him with their knives, had they not been prevented by Mr. Bruce's servants, according to his constant orders. They had permission indeed to use their sticks, and had on this occasion employed them so liberally, especially Abd el Gin, who was the first to seize the robber, that the latter, a servant of Sidi Hassan, was known to be alive by nothing but his groans.

Next morning, at dawn of day, the caravan was all in motion, having received intelligence that two days before a body of the Atouni, a predatory tribe of Arabs, had watered at Terfowey. Sidi Hassan appeared on horseback, attended by about a hundred of his followers, and sent word to Mr. Bruce, who was also mounted, to advance with only two servants. He returned for answer that he had no intention of advancing; but if Sidi Hassan had any business with him, he would meet him one to one, or three to six just as he pleased. Sidi Hassan, now sent word that he wanted to communicate the account he had heard respecting the Atouni, that Mr. Bruce might be upon his guard; to which our traveller replied, that he was already on his guard against thieves of all descriptions, and made no distinction if people were themselves thieves, or encouraged others to be so, or  
whether

---

Mr. Bruce's interview with the conductor of the caravan.

---

whether they were Atouni or Ababde. A third message came from Sidi Hassan requesting, as it was a cold morning, that Mr. Bruce would give him a dish of coffee. The latter ordered one of his servants to bring the coffee-pot, and directing his people to sit down, rode up to Sidi Hassan and dismounted; the other did the same. He said he was much surprized that, after his message the preceeding night, Mr. Bruce had not gone to him; that the whole camp was in disturbance on account of the beating of the man, and it was as much as he could do to prevent his soldiers from falling upon and exterminating our traveller and his followers, who did wrong to protect the Turks, who always carried money to Mecca for merchandize, and defrauded him of his dues. The servant had by this time poured out a dish of coffee; but Mr. Bruce said to Sidi Hassan: "Stay, Sir, till we know whether we are at peace. If that be the way of levying dues upon the Turks, to send thieves to rob them in my tent, you should have first advised me of it, and then we might have settled the business. With regard to your preventing people from murdering me, it is a boast so ridiculous that I only laugh at it. Those pale-faced fellows who are about you muffled up in burnouses for fear of cold this morning, are they capable of looking janissaries like mine in the face? Speak low, and in Arabic, when you talk at this rate, or it may not perhaps be in my power to return you the compliment you paid me last night, or hinder them from killing you on the spot!" On this a man behind exclaimed: "Were ever such words spoken? Tell me, master, are you a king?"—"If Sidi Hassan is your master," replied Mr. Bruce, "and you speak to me on this occasion, you are a wretch! get out of my sight! I swear that while you are here I will not drink a dish of coffee, and will instantly mount my horse." He then rose, and the servant was preparing to take back the coffee-pot, when Hassan ordered his servant out of his presence,

---

Mountains of variously colored marble.

---

saying; "No, no, give me the coffee if we are in peace." He drank it accordingly. "Now," said he, "past is past; the Atouni are to meet us at the mouth of Beder (one of the narrow passes in the mountains; your people are better armed than mine, they are Turks, and used to fighting. I wish you to go foremost, and my people will take charge of your camels, though they have four thousand of their own, and have enough to do to take charge of their corn"—"And I" replied Mr. Bruce, "if I wanted water and provision would go to meet the Atouni, who would use me well. You don't know that the Atouni are Arabs of Ali Bey, and that I am his man in confidence, going to the sherriffe of Mecca? The Atouni will not hurt us; but as you pretend to be the commander of the caravan, we have all sworn that we will not fire a shot till we see you heartily engaged; and then we will do our best to save the sherriffe of Mecca's corn for his sake only. They all cried out; *El Fedtah! El Fedtah!* and Mr. Bruce said the prayer of peace as a proxy, as none of the Turks would go near Hassen.

On the way from Terfowey to Cosseir Mr. Bruce was astonished at the immense quantities of jasper, granite, and marble of various colors, but chiefly red and green, of which the naked mountains are here composed. As the range of those containing the red kind is nearest to the Red Sea, and must be seen from ship sailing down the Abyssinian coast, he conjectures that this sea may more probably have received its name from their appearance, than from any other circumstance to which writers have thought fit to ascribe it. He now ceased to wonder, like many other travellers, where the ancients procured that prodigious quantity of fine marble with which all their building abound, after having passed in four days more porphyry, marble, and jasper, than would build Rome, Athens, Corinth, Syracuse, Memphis, Alexandria, and half a dozen such cities.

## Cosseir.

At length on the 22d they arrived at Cosseir, a small mud-walled village, built upon the shore, among hillocks of floating sand. It is defended by a square fort of hewn stone, with square towers in the angles, which have in them three small cannon of iron, and one of brass, all in very bad condition; of no other use but to terrify the Arabs, and hinder them from plundering the town when full of corn, going to Mecca in time of famine. The walls are not high; nor was it necessary, if the great guns were in order. But as this is not the case, the ramparts are heightened by clay, or by mud walls, to screen the soldiers from the fire-arms of the Arabs, that might otherwise command them from the sandy hills in the neighbourhood.

The port, if we may call it so, is on the south-east of the town. It is nothing but a rock, which runs about four hundred yards into the sea, and defends the vessels which ride to the west of it, from the north and north-east winds, as the houses of the town cover them from the north-west. There is a large inclosure, with a high mud wall; and, within, every merchant has a shop or magazine for his corn and merchandise: little of this last is imported, unless coarse India goods, for the consumption of Upper Egypt, since the trade to Dongala and Sennaar has been interrupted.

Mr. Bruce found, by many meridian altitudes of the sun, taken at the castle, that Cosseir is in latitude  $26^{\circ} 7' 31''$  north; and, by three observations of Jupiter's satellites, he found its longitude to be  $34^{\circ} 4' 15''$  east of the meridian Greenwich.

The caravan from Seyne arrived at this time, escorted by four hundred Ababde, all upon camels, each armed with two short javelins. The manner of their riding was very whimsical; they had two small saddles on each camel, and set back to back, which might be, in their practice, convenient enough; but,

---

Interview between Mr. Bruce and the chief of the Ababde.

---

if they had been to fight with our travellers, every ball would have killed two of them.

The whole town was filled with terror at the influx of so many barbarians, who know no law but their own will. Every door was shut and Hussein Bey, one of the Beys who had been driven from Cairo by Ali Bey, and who then resided in the castle of Cosseir, sent word to Mr. Bruce to remove thither. Our traveller hearing that these were people of Nimmer, resolved to try whether he could trust himself among them in the desert or not; but though he felt little apprehension for his personal safety, he took the precaution to deposit the most valuable part of his baggage, his medicines, and memorandums, in a chamber in the castle. Next morning he was looking for shells by the sea side, when one of his servants came in a great fright and hurry to inform him, that the Ababde had discovered that Abd-el-gin was in Atouni their enemy, and had either cut his throat or were about to do it. Mounting a horse, which the man had brought Mr. Bruce immediately galloped off towards the camp of the Arabs. He had not proceeded above half a mile over the sands when he began to reflect on the rashness of the undertaking, and that he was committing himself to the mercy of a band of savages whose only trade was robbery and plunder; and by whom he should probably be as ill-treated as the man whom he hoped to rescue. Perceiving, however, a crowd of people before him, and considering that they might be at that moment dispatching the poor fellow, all consideration of his own safety vanished, and without loss of time he advanced towards them. After some inquiries, which were at first answered with great shyness, Mr. Bruce found that these Ababde were commanded by Ibrahim the son of his friend, the Nimmer, to whom he desired to be instantly conducted. On his way he saw the unfortunate Abd-el-gin, who was almost strangled by a hair-rope thrown round his neck, and cried out

most



---

Interview between Mr. Bruce and the chief of the Ababde.

---

most pitifully to our traveller not to leave him. Proceeding to the black tent which had a long spear thrust up in the end of it, he met Ibrahim and his brother at the door. No sooner had he dismounted, and taken hold of the pillar of the tent, saying *Fiarduc*, "I am under your protection," than he was recognized by the Arabs. "What," said they, "are you Yagoube, our physician, and our friend?" "Let me ask you," replied he, "if you are the Ababde of Shekh Ammer, who cursed yourselves and your children, if ever you lifted a hand against me or mine, in the deserts or in the plowed field? If you have repented of that oath or sworn falsely on purpose to deceive me, here I am come to you in the desert."—"We are the Ababde of Shekh Ammer," rejoined Ibrahim, "there are no other, and we still say, 'Cursed be he, whether our father or child, that lifts his hand against you in the desert or in the plowed field.'" "Then," said Mr. Bruce, with a vehemence justified by the occasion, "you are all accursed in the desert and in the field; for a number of your people are going to murder my servant. They took him indeed from my house in the town; perhaps that is not included in your course, as it is neither in the desert nor the plowed field." "Whew!" replied Ibrahim, with a kind of whistle, "that is downright nonsense. Who are those of my people that have authority to murder and take prisoners while I am here? Here, one of you, mount Yagoube's horse and bring that man to me." Then turning to Mr. Bruce, he added, "For God renounce me and mine, if it is as you say, and one of them hath touched the hair of his head, if ever he drinks again of the Nile." The culprit Abd-el-gin, attended by forty or fifty of the Ababde, soon arrived. A violent altercation now ensued between Ibrahim and his people in their own language. Mr. Bruce soon found that Sidi Hassan, the leader of the caravan, in revenge for the beating which his servant had received in his attempt to steal

---

Interview between Mr. Bruce and the chief of the Ababde.

---

the baggage of the Turks, had informed the Ababde that Abd-el-gin was an Atouni spy, whom he had detected, and who was come to learn their numbers, that he might bring his tribe to surprize them. As they had not the slightest intimation that he was under the protection of Mr. Bruce, or that the latter was at Cosseir, the Ababde considered that they had a very meritorious sacrifice to make in the person of poor Abd-el-gin. After this explanation, both parties were again on the most friendly footing; fresh medicines were asked for the Nimmer, and great thankfulness expressed for those formerly received; and a prodigious quantity of meat, excellently dressed, and most agreeably diluted with fresh water from the coldest rocks of Terfowey, was set before Mr. Bruce on wooden platters. At length he took his leave accompanied by Abd-el-gin, who had been clothed by Ibrahim from head to foot, and two Ababde, as a protection in case of accident.

Hussein Bey had brought with him from Jidda to Cosseir a small but tight vessel belonging to Sheher on the east coast of Arabia Felix, which came from that country with a cargo of frankincense. The Rais had spoken to the Bey to recommend him to Mr. Bruce, who proposed to the latter to make it worth the captain's while to take their mutual friends, the Turks on board, and carry them to Yambo, that they might not be deprived of the blessing which would result from a visit to the tomb of their prophet, and which they had toiled so much to earn. He promised in this case to hire the vessel on her return from Yambo, for the purpose of making a survey of the Red Sea to the Streights of Babelmandel. This proposal, so agreeable to all parties, was immediately accepted. The Turks and the Bey departed, and with them Mr. Bruce dispatched the Arab Abd-el-gin to whom he not only gave something himself, but recommended him to his benevolent countrymen at Jidda,

Jidda, in case the vessel should touch there in her voyage.

Mr. Bruce, on the departure of Hussein Bey, took up his quarters in the castle, and as the Ababde had told strange stories about the Mountain of Emeralds, he determined, till his captain should return, to make a voyage thither. There was no possibility of knowing the distance by report; sometimes it was twenty-five miles, sometimes it was fifty, and sometimes it was a hundred.

He chose a man who had been twice at these mountains of emeralds; and with the best boat then in the harbour, on Tuesday the 14th of March, they sailed, with the wind at north-east, about an hour before the dawn of day. They kept coasting along with a very moderate wind, much diverted with the red and green appearance of the marble mountains on the coast. Their vessel had one sail, like a straw mattrass, made of the leaves of a kind of a palm-tree, which they call Doom. It was fixed above, and drew up like a curtain, but did not lower with a yard like a sail; so that upon stress of weather, if the sail was furled, it was so top-heavy, that the ship must founder, or the mast be carried away. But, by way of indemnification, the planks of the vessel were sewed together, and there was not a nail, nor a piece of iron, in the whole ship; so that when you struck upon a rock it was seldom that any damage ensued.

On the 15th, about nine o'clock, Mr. Bruce saw a large high rock, like a pillar, rising out of the sea. At first, he took it for a part of the continent; but, as he advanced nearer it, the sun being very clear, and the sea calm, he took an observation, and as their situation was lat.  $25^{\circ} 6'$ , and the island about a league distant, to the S. S. W. of them, he concluded its latitude to be pretty exactly  $25^{\circ} 3'$  north. This island is about three miles from the shore, of an oval form, rising in the middle. It seems to be of a kind of granite; and is called, in the language of the country, Jibbel Siberget,

Siberget, which has been translated *The Mountain of Emeralds*. Siberget, however, is a word in the language of the *Shepherds*, who, probably, never in their lives saw an emerald; and though the Arabic translation is *Jibbel Zumrud*, and that word has been transferred to the emerald, a very fine stone, oftener seen since the discovery of the new world, yet Mr. Bruce very much doubts, whether either *Siberget* or *Zumrud* ever meant Emerald in old times.

On the 16th, at day-break, our traveller took with him the Arab of Cosseir, who knew the place. They landed on a point perfectly desert; at first, sandy like Cosseir, afterwards, where the soil was fixed, producing some few plants of rue or absinthium. They advanced above three miles farther in a perfectly desert country, with only a few acacia-trees scattered here and there, and came to the foot of the mountain. About seven yards up from its base, are five pits or shafts none of them four feet in diameter, called the *Zumrud Wells*, from which the ancients are said to have drawn the emeralds. Our travellers were not provided with materials, and little endowed with inclination to descend into any one of them, where the air was probably bad. Mr. Bruce picked up the nozzels, and some fragments of lamps, like those of which we find millions in Italy; and some worn fragments, but very small ones, of that brittle green crystal, which is the siberget and bilur of Ethiopia, perhaps the zumrud, the smaragdus described by Pliny, but by no means the emerald, known since the discovery of the new world, whose first character absolutely defeats its pretension, the true Peruvian emerald being equal in hardness to the ruby.—M. Bruce, having satisfied his curiosity as to these mountains, without having seen a living creature, returned to his boat, where he found all well, and an excellent dinner of fish prepared.

About three o'clock in the afternoon, with a favourable wind and fine weather, they continued along the  
coats,

---

Mr. Bruce sets out to make a survey of the Red Sea.

---

coast, with an easy sail. They saw no appearance of any inhabitants; the mountains were broken and pointed taking the direction of the coast, advancing and receding as the shore itself did. They continued this voyage; and, after encountering storms that were nearly proving fatal to them, they arrived safe at Cosseir, on the 19th, about the close of the evening.

On the 5th of April, Mr. Bruce, after having made his last observation of longitude at Cosseir, embarked on board a vessel he had procured for the purpose, and sailed from that port. It was necessary to conceal from some of his servants his intention of proceeding to the bottom of the Gulph, lest, finding themselves among Christians so near Cairo, they might desert a voyage of which they were so sick, before it was well begun.

In the morning of the 6th, they made the Jaffateen Islands. They are four in number, joined by shoals and sunken rocks. They are crooked, or bent like half a bow, and are dangerous for ships sailing in the night, because there seems to be a passage between them, to which, when pilots are attending, they neglect two small dangerous sunk rocks, that lie almost in the middle of the entrance, in deep water.

On the 9th, they arrived at Tor, a small straggling village, with a convent of Greek Monks, belonging to Mount Sinai. Don John de Castro took this town when it was walled and fortified, soon after the discovery of the Indies by the Portuguese; it has never since been of any consideration. It serves now only as a watering-place for ships going to and from Suez. From this we have a distinct view of the points of the mountains Horeb and Sinai, which appear behind and above the others, their tops being often covered with snow in winter.

The Rais, having dispatched his business was eager to depart; and, accordingly on the 11th of April, at day-break, they stood out of the harbour of Tor. At night, by an observation of two stars in the meridian,

Mr. Bruce concluded the latitude of Cape Mahomet to be  $17^{\circ} 54'$  N. It must be understood of the mountain, or high land, which forms the Cape, not the low point. The ridge of rocks that runs along behind Tor, bound that low sandy country, called the Desert of Sin, to the eastward, and end in this Cape, which is the high land observed at sea; but the lower part, or southernmost extreme of the Cape, runs about three leagues off from the high land; and is so low that it cannot be seen from deck above three leagues.

On the 12th they sailed from Cape Mahomet, just as the sun appeared. They passed the island of Tyrone, in the mouth of the Eranitic Gulf, which divides it pretty equally into two; or rather the north-west side is the narrowest. The direction of the Gulf is nearly north and south.

On the 15th they came to an anchor at El Har, where they saw high, craggy, and broken mountains, called the Mountains of Ruddua. These abound with springs of water; all sort of Arabian and African fruits grow here in perfection, and every kind of vegetable that they will take the pains to cultivate. It is the paradise of the people of Yambo; those of any substance have country-houses there; but, strange to tell, they stay but for a short time, and prefer the bare, dry, and burning sands about Yambo to one of the finest climates, and most verdant pleasant countries, that exists in the world. The people of the place told Mr. Bruce, that water freezes there in winter, and that there are some of the inhabitants who have red hair and blue eyes, a thing scarcely ever seen but in the coldest mountains in the east.

On the 16th, about ten o'clock, they passed a mosque, or Shekh's tomb, on the main land, on their left hand, called Kubbet Yambo, and before eleven they anchored in the mouth of the port in deep water. Yambo, corruptly called Imbo, is an ancient city, now dwindled

## Yambo.

dwindled to a paltry village. Yambo, in the language of the country, signifies a fountain or spring, a very copious one of excellent water being found there among the date trees, and it is one of the stations of the Emir Hadje in going to and coming from, Mecca. The advantage of the port, however, which the other has not, and the protection of the castle, have carried trading vessels to the modern Yambo, where there is no water but what is brought from pools dug on purpose to receive the rain when it falls.

Yambo, or at least the present town of that name, Mr. Bruce found, by many observations of the sun and stars, to be in latitude  $24^{\circ} 3' 35''$  north, and in long.  $38^{\circ} 16' 30''$  east from the meridian of Greenwich.

The many delays of loading the wheat, and the desire of doubling the quantity Mr. Bruce had been permitted to take, detained him at Yambo till the 27th of April, very much against his inclination. He was not a little uneasy at thinking among what a banditti he lived, whose daily wish was to rob and murder him, from which they were restrained by fear only; and this, a fit of drunkenness or a piece of bad news, such as a report of Ali Bey's death, might remove in a moment. Indeed they were allowed to want nothing. A sheep, some bad beer, and some very good wheat-bread, were delivered to them every day from the Aga, which with dates and honey, and a variety of presents from those that Mr. Bruce attended as a physician, made them pass their time comfortably enough; they went frequently in the boats to fish at sea, and as our traveller had brought with him three fiz-gigs of different sizes, with the proper lines, he seldom returned without killing four or five dolphins. The sport with the line was likewise excellent. They had vinegar in plenty at Yambo: onions, and several other greens, from Raddua; and being all cooks, they lived well.

On the 28th of April, in the morning, they sailed

## Jidda.

with a cargo of wheat that did not belong to them, and three passengers instead of one, for whom only Mr. Bruce had undertaken. After touching at different islands on the 3d of May they arrived at Jidda, close upon the quay, where the officers of the custom-house immediately took possession of their baggage.

The port of Jidda is very extensive, consisting of numberless shoals, small islands, and sunken rocks, with channels, however, between them, and deep water. You are very safe in Jidda harbour whatever wind blows, as there are numberless shoals which prevent the water from ever being put into any general motion; and you may moor head and stern, with twenty anchors out if you please. But the danger of being lost, perhaps, lies in the going in and coming out of the harbour. Indeed the observation is here verified, the more *dangerous* the port, the *abler* the *pilots*, and no accident ever happens.

From Yambo to Jidda Mr. Bruce had slept little, making his memoranda as full upon the spot as possible. He had, besides, an aguish disorder, which very much troubled him, and in dress and cleanliness was so like a Galiogy, (or Turkish seaman,) that the Emir Bahar (captain of the port) was astonished at hearing his servants say he was an Englishman, at the time they carried away all his baggage and instruments to the custom-house. The Emir Bahar sent his servant, however, with him to the Bengal-house, who promised him, in broken English, all the way a very magnificent reception from his countrymen. Upon his naming all the captains for his choice, Mr. Bruce desired to be carried to a Scotchman, a relation of his own, who was then accidentally leaning over the rail of the staircase, leading up to his apartment. Mr. Bruce saluted him by his name; but he fell into a violent rage, calling him a villain, thief, cheat, and renegado rascal; and declared, if he offered to proceed a step further, he would throw him down stairs. Our tra-



## Mr. Bruce's reception at Jidda.

veller went away without reply, and going up an opposite staircase, was conducted into a large room, where Captain Thornhill was sitting, in a white callico waistcoat, a very high, pointed white cotton night-cap, with a large tumbler of water before him, seemingly deep in thought. The Emir Bahar's servant brought Mr. Bruce forward by the hand, a little within the door; the captain looked very steadily, but not sternly, at him, and desired the servant to go away, and shut the door. "Sir," says he, "are you an Englishman?"—Mr. Bruce bowed. "You surely are sick, you should be in your bed.—If you want a passage to India, apply to no one but Thornhill of the Bengal Merchant.—Here! Philip, Philip?"—Philip appeared.—"Boy," says he, in Portuguese, which, perhaps, he supposed Mr. Bruce did not understand, "here is a poor Englishman, that should be either in his bed or his grave; carry him to the cook; tell him to give him as much broth and mutton as he can eat; the fellow seems to have been starved; but I would rather have the feeding of ten to India, than the burying of one at Jidda." Philip accordingly carried him into a court-yard, where they used to expose the samples of their India goods in large bales. It had a portico along the left-hand side of it, which seemed designed for a stable. To this place Mr. Bruce was introduced; and thither the cook brought him his dinner. Several of the English from the vessels, lascars and others, came to look at him; and he heard it, in general, agreed among them that he was a very thief-like fellow, and certainly a Turk, and d—mn them if they should like to fall into his hands. After his repast he fell fast asleep upon a mat. He had with him the keys of his boxes and trunks; and Yousef Cabil, vizir or governor of Jidda, too eager for pillage to suffer one of Mr. Bruce's servants to fetch them, directed the hinges to be taken off at the back, and thus obtained access to the contents without opening the

---

Mr. Bruce's reception at Jidda.

---

the locks. The first thing that presented itself was the firman of the Grand Signior; after this was a white satin bag addressed to the Khan of Tartary; next a green and gold silk bag with the letters for the Sherriffe of Mecca; a plain crimson satin bag with letters for Metical Aga, the chief minister of the Sherriffe; and lastly the vizir found a letter from Ali Bey to himself written with all the superiority of a prince to a slave. Yousef now thought that he had gone too far; and calling Mr. Bruce's servant, vehemently upbraided him for not telling who he was. He then ordered the baggage to be nailed up; and, attended by a number of naked blackguards whom they call soldiers, immediately repaired to the Bengal-house. The whole factory took alarm; for about twenty-six years before, the English traders, fourteen in number, were all murdered while sitting at dinner by these savage people. Great enquiry was made after the English nobleman, whom nobody had seen; but it was said that one of his servants was in the house. Mr. Bruce was sitting drinking coffee on the mat, when the vizir's horse came; and the whole court was filled. One of the clerks of the custom-house asked him where his master was. To which he replied: "In heaven." The vizir next came up, and repeated the question; when Mr. Bruce answered that he did not know its purpose; but he was the owner of the baggage which had been taken to the custom-house. The vizir was much surprized at this explanation; matters were made up between him and Mr. Bruce; and all heads were now employed to obtain the strongest letters possible to the Naybe, or prince of Massuah, the king of Abyssinia, Michael Suhul the minister, and the king of Sennaar. All these letters were written in a style such as Mr. Bruce could have desired; but this was not sufficient in the opinion of Captain Price of the Lion of Bombay: this gentleman proposed to Metical Aga, who was a firm friend of the English at Jidda, to send a man of his own with

---

---

Manner of carrying on trade at Jidda.

---

---

with our traveller, together with the letters ; and Mr. Bruce was persuaded that to this measure, under Providence he owed his life. Accordingly an Abyssinian, named Mahomet Gibberti, was appointed to go with particular letters besides those which Mr. Bruce carried to the Naybe of Massuah, and to be witness of his reception there.

Of all the new things Mr. Bruce had yet seen, what most astonished him was the manner in which trade was carried on at this place. Nine ships were there from India: some of them worth perhaps 200,000*l*. One merchant, a Turk, living at Mecca, thirty hours' journey off, where no Christian dares go, whilst the whole Continent is open to the Turk for escape, offers to purchase the cargoes of four out of nine of these ships himself; another, of the same cast, comes and says, he will buy none unless he has them all. The samples are shewn, and the cargoes of the whole nine ships are carried into the wildest part of Arabia, by men with whom you would not willingly trust yourself alone in the field. This is not all: two India brokers come into the room to settle the price, one on the part of the India captain, the other on that of the buyer, the Turk. They are neither Mahometans nor Christians, but have credit with both. They sit down on the carpet, and take an India shawl, which they carry on their shoulder, like a napkin, and spread it over their hands. They talk, in the mean time, on different subjects, of the arrival of ships from India, or of the news of the day, as if they were employed in no serious business whatever. After about twenty minutes spent in handling each others fingers under the shawl, the bargain is concluded, say for nine ships, without one word ever having been spoken on the subject, or pen or ink used in any shape whatever. There never was one instance of a dispute happening on these sales. But this is not all: the money is to be paid. A private Moor, who has nothing to support him

## Disadvantages of the situation of Jidda.

him but his character, becomes responsible for the payment of these cargoes; his name, when Mr. Bruce was there, was Ibrahim Saraf, *i. e.* Ibrahim the broker. This man delivers a number of coarse hempen bags, full of what is supposed to be money. He marks the contents upon the bag, and puts his seal upon the string that ties the mouth of it. This is received for what is marked upon it, without any one ever having opened one of the bags; and, in India, it is current for the value marked upon it, as long as the bag lasts.

Jidda, as well as all the east coast of the Red Sea, is very unwholesome. Immediately without the gate of that town, to the eastwards is a desert plain filled with the huts of the Bedowéens, or country Arabs, built of long bundles of spartum, or bent grass, put together like fascines. These Bedowéens, supply Jiddo with milk and butter. There is no stirring out of the town, even for a walk except for about half a mile, on the south side by the sea, where there is a number of stinking pools of stagnant water, which contributes to make the town very unwholesome.

This place, besides being the most unwholesome part of Arabia, is, at the same time, in the most barren and desert situation. This, and many other inconveniences under which it labours, would, probably, have occasioned its being abandoned altogether, were it not for its vicinity to Mecca, and the great and sudden influx of wealth from the India trade, which once a year, arrives in this port, but does not continue, passing on, as through a turnpike, to Mecca, when it is dispersed all over the east. Very little advantage, however, accrues to Jidda. The custom are all immediately sent to a needy sovereign, and a hungry set of relations, dependents and ministers, at Mecca. The gold is returned in bags and boxes, and passes on as rapidly to the ships as the goods do to the market, and leaves as little profit behind. In the mean time, provisions rise to  
a pro-

## Plurality of wives.

a prodigious price, and this falls upon the townsmen, while all the profit of the traffic is in the hands of strangers; most of whom, after the market is over (which does not last six weeks,) retire to Yemen, and other neighbouring countries, which abound in every sort of provision.

Though Jidda is the country of their prophet, yet no where are there so many unmarried women; and the permission of marrying four wives was allowed in the district in the first instance, and afterwards communicated to all the tribes. But Mahomet, in his permission of a plurality of wives, seems constantly to have been on his guard, against suffering that, which was intended for the welfare of his people, from operating in a different manner. He did not permit a man to marry two, three, or four wives, unless he could maintain them. He was interested for the rights and rank of these women; and the man so marrying was obliged to shew before the Cadi, or some equivalent officer, or judge, that it was in his power to support them, according to their birth. It was not so with concubines, with women who were purchased, or who were taken in war. Every man enjoyed these at his pleasure and their peril, that is whether he was able to maintain them or not. From the great scarcity of provisions, which is the result of an extraordinary concourse to a place almost destitute of the necessaries of life, few inhabitants of Jidda can avail themselves of the privilege granted them by Mahomet. A man therefore cannot marry more than one wife, because he cannot maintain more, and from this cause arises the want of people, and the large number of unmarried women.

The kindness and attention of Mr. Bruce here received from his countrymen did not leave him as long as he was on shore. They all did him the honour to attend him to the water edge. All the quay of Jidda was lined with people to see the English salute; and along with his vessel sailed another bound to

---

 Departure from Jidda—Konfodar.
 

---

Masuah, which carried Mahomet Abdelcader, governor of Dabalac, over to his government.

Jidda is in latitude  $23^{\circ} 0' 1''$  north, and in longitude  $39^{\circ} 16' 45''$  east of the meridian of Greenwich. The weather there had few changes, and the general wind was north-west, or more northerly. This blowing along the direction of the gulf brought a great deal of damp along with it; and this damp increases as the season advances. Once in twelve or fourteen days, perhaps, they had a south wind, which was always dry.

On the 8th of July 1769, Mr. Bruce sailed from the harbour of Jidda, on board the same vessel as before and suffered the Rais to take a small loading for his own account, upon condition that he was to carry no passengers. The wind was fair, and they sailed through the British fleet at their anchors. As they had all honoured our traveller with their regret at parting, and accompanied him to the shore, the Rais was surprised to see the respect paid to his little vessel as it passed under their huge sterns, every one hoisting her colours, and saluting it with eleven guns.

At a quarter past eight, on the eleventh, they were towed to their anchorage in the harbour of Konfodah, which means the town of the hedge-hog. It is a small village, consisting of about two hundred miserable houses, built with green wood, and covered with mats, made of the doom, or palm-tree, lying on a bay, or rather a shallow bason, in a desert waste or plain. Behind the town are small hillocks of white sand. Nothing grows on shore excepting kelp; but it is exceedingly beautiful, and very luxuriant; farther in there are gardens. Fish is in great plenty; butter and milk in abundance; even the desert looks fresher than other deserts, which makes it probable that rain sometimes falls there.

Konfodah is in latitude  $19^{\circ} 7'$  north. It is one of the most unwholesome parts on the Red Sea, provision.

sion is very dear and bad, and the water execrable. Goats' flesh is the only meat, and that very dear and lean.

At five in the afternoon of the 14th, they passed Ras Heli, which is the boundary between Yemen, or Arabia Felix, and the Hejaz, or province of Mecca, the first belonging to the Imam, or king of Sana, the other to the Sherriffe. Mr. Bruce desired the Rais to anchor this night close under the Cape, as it was perfectly calm and clear; and, by taking a mean of five observations of the passage of so many stars, the most proper for the purpose, over the meridian, he determined the latitude of Ras Heli, and consequently the boundary of the two states, Hejaz and Yemen, or Arabia Felix and Arabia Deserta, to be  $18^{\circ} 36'$  north.

Every part of the sandy desert at the foot of the mountains is called *Tehama*, which extends to Mocha. But in the Maps it is marked as a separate country from Arabia Felix, whereas it is but the low part, or sea-coast of it; and is not a separate jurisdiction. It is called *Tema* in scripture, and derives its name from *Taämi* in Arabic, which signifies the sea-coast. There is little water here, as it never rains; there is also no animal but the gazel or antelope, and but a small number of these. There are few birds, and those are generally silent. On the 15th, they came to an anchor in the port of Sibt, where Mr. Bruce went ashore to make his observations on the country and inhabitants. The mountains from Koutumbal ran in an even chain along the coast, at no great distance; but of such a height, that as yet they had seen nothing like them. Sibt is too mean, and too small, to be called a village, even in Arabia; it consists of about fifteen or twenty miserable huts built of straw; around it there is a plantation of doom-trees, of the leaves of which they make mats and sails, which is the whole manufacture

of the place. The Cortushi (a very brutish kind of people) are the inhabitants; they are perfectly lean, but muscular and strong; they wear their own hair, which they divide upon the crown of their head; it is black and bushy; and, although sufficiently long, seems to partake of the woolly quality of the negro. They bind the head with a cord or fillet of the doom-leaf, like the ancient diadem. The women are generally ill-favoured, and go naked like the men. Those that are married have, for the most part, a rag about their middle, some of them not that. Girls of all ages go quite naked, but seem not to be conscious of any impropriety in their appearance. Their lips, eye-brows, and foreheads above the eye-brows, are all marked with stibium, or antimony, the common ornament of savages throughout the world. They seemed to be perfectly on an equality with the men; walked, sat, and smoked with them, contrary to the practice of women among the Turks and Arabs.

Here they found no provisions: and the water was very bad. Having returned on board their vessel at sun-set, they anchored in eleven fathom little less than a mile from the shore. The harbour of Sibt is of a semi-circular form, screened between N. N. E. and S. S. W. but to the south and south-west it is exposed, and therefore is good only in summer.

They sailed from this port on the 16th, and at nine in the evening anchored before Djezan, which is in lat.  $16^{\circ} 45'$  north, situated on a cape, which forms one side of a large bay. It is built, as are all the towns on the coast, with straw and mud. It was once a very considerable place for trade; but since coffee hath been so much in demand, of which they have none, that commerce is moved to Loheia and Hodeida. It is an usurpation from the territory of the Imam, by a Sherriffé of the family of Beni Hassan, called Booarish. The inhabitants are all Sherriffes, in other terms, troublesome, ignorant fanatics.

Djezan



## Loheia.

Djezan is one of the towns most subject to fevers.—the farenteit (Pharaoh's worm) is very frequent here. They have great abundance of excellent fish, and fruit in plenty, which is brought from the mountains, whence also they are supplied with very good water.

They sailed from hence in the evening of the 17th, and at seven in the morning of the 18th they first discovered the mountains under which lies the town of Loheia.—The bay was so shallow, and the tide being at ebb, they could get no nearer than within about five miles of the shore. Loheia is built upon the south-west side of a peninsula, surrounded every where, but on the east, by the sea. In the middle of this neck there is a small mountain which serves for a fortress, and there are towers with cannon, which reach across on each side of the hill to the shore. Beyond this is a plain, where the Arabs, intending to attack the town, generally assemble. At Loheia they had a very uneasy sensation; a kind of pricking came into their legs, which were bare, occasioned by the salt effluvia, or steams, from the earth, which all about the town, and further to the south, is strongly impregnated with that mineral. Fish, and butchers' meat, and indeed all sorts of provision, are plentiful and reasonable at Loheia, but the water is bad. It is found in the sand at the root of the mountains, down the sides of which it has fallen in the time of the rain, and is brought to the town in skins upon camels. There is also plenty of fruit brought from the mountains by the Bedowé, who live in the skirts of the town, and supply it with milk, firewood, and fruit, chiefly grapes and bananas.

The government of the Imam is much more gentle than any Moorish government in Arabia or Africa; the people too are of gentle manners, the men, from early ages, being accustomed to trade. The women at Loheia are as solicitous to please as those of the most polished nations in Europe; and, though very  
retired,

## Mocha.

retired, whether married or unmarried, they are not less careful of their dress and persons. At home they wear nothing but a long shift of fine cotton cloth, suitable to their quality. They dye their feet and hands with henna, not only for ornament, but as an astringent, to keep them dry from sweat; they wear their own hair, which is plaited, and falls in long tails behind.

On the 27th, in the evening, they sailed from Loheia, and, on the 29th, anchored off the point of the shoal which lies E. of the north fort of Mocha. That town makes an agreeable appearance from the sea. Behind it there is a grove of palm-trees, that do not seem to have the beauty of those in Egypt, probably owing to their being exposed to the violent south-westers that blow here, and make it very uneasy riding for vessels; there is, however, very seldom any damage done. The port is formed by two points of land, which make a semicircle. Upon each of the points is a small fort; the town is in the middle, and if attacked by an enemy, these two forts are so detached, that they might be made of more use to annoy the town than they could ever be to defend the harbour. The ground for anchorage is of the very best kind; sand without coral, which last chafes the cables all over the Red Sea.

At seven o'clock in the morning of the 30th, with a gentle but steady wind at W. they sailed for the mouth of the Indian Ocean the coast of Arabia, all along from Mocha to the Straits, is bold, and not dangerous night or day. They continued their course within a mile of the shore, where, in some places there appeared to be small woods; in others, a flat bare country, bounded with mountains at a considerable distance.—In the afternoon, about four, they saw the mountain which forms one of the capes of the Straits of Babelmandel, in shape resembling a gunner's quoin. About six they anchored for the

night

## Straits of Babelmandel.

night behind a small point. At nine in the morning of the 31st, they came to an anchor above Jibbel Raban, or Pilot's Island, just under the cape, which, on the Arabian side, forms the N. entrance of the Straits. Here they caught a prodigious number of fine fish; but as the Rais said they were poisonous, several of Mr. Bruce's people took the alarm, and would not eat them. He, however, took all those that most resembled the fish of his own northern seas, and had no reason to complain.

After getting within the Straits, the channel is divided into two, by the island of Perim, otherwise called *Mehum*. The inmost and northern channel, or that towards the Arabian shore, is two leagues broad at most, and has from twelve to seventeen fathom of water. The other entry is three leagues broad, with deep water, from twenty to thirty fathom. From this, the coast on both sides runs nearly in a north-west direction, widening as it advances, and the Indian Ocean grows straiter. The coast upon the left hand is part of the kingdom of Adel, and, on the right, that of Arabia Felix.

On the 2d of August, at sun-rise, they saw land a-head, which they took to be the main; but, upon nearer approach, and the day becoming clearer, they found two low islands to the leeward, one of which they fetched with great difficulty. They found there the stock of an old acacia-tree, and two or three bundles of wreck, or rotten sticks, which they gathered with great care; and all of them agreed, they would eat breakfast, dinner, and supper hot, instead of the cold repast they had made in the Straits. They now made several large fires; one took the charge of the coffee, another boiled the rice; they killed four turtles, made ready a dolphin; got beer, wine, and brandy, and drank the King's health in earnest, which their regimen would not allow them to do in the Straits of Babelmandel. While this good cheer was preparing, Mr. Bruce saw, with his glass, first one man  
running

running along the coast westward, who did not stop; about a quarter of an hour after, came another upon a camel, walking at the ordinary pace, who dismounted just opposite to them, and, as he thought, kneeled down to say his prayers upon the sand. They had launched their boat immediately upon seeing the trunk of the tree on the island; so they were ready; and Mr. Bruce ordered two of the men to row him on shore, which they did. It is a bay of but ordinary depth, with straggling trees, and some flat ground along the coast. Immediately behind is a row of mountains of a brownish or black colour.

Mr. Bruce went on shore at the place; and, after some little intercourse with some of the natives, whose conduct was very suspicious, he directed the Rais to stand out towards Crab island; and there being a gentle breeze from the shore, carrying an easy sail, they stood over upon Mocha town, to avoid some rocks or islands. While lying at Crab-island; he observed two stars pass the meridian, and by them he concluded the latitude of that island to be  $13^{\circ} 2' 45''$  North. The 6th, in the morning, they arrived at Loheia, in lat.  $15^{\circ} 40' 52''$  north, and in long.  $42^{\circ} 58' 15''$  east of the meridian of Greenwich.

Every thing being prepared for our travellers' departure, they sailed from Loheia on the 3d of September 1769, for Masuah. The harbour of Loheia, which is by much the largest in the Red Sea, is now so shallow, and choaked up, that, unless by a narrow canal through which you enter and go out, there is no where three fathom of water, and in many places not half the depth. This is the case with all the harbours on the east coast of the Red Sea, while those on the west are deep, without any banks or bars before them. As the wind had failed, they made no progress till the 5th, when they came in sight of several small uninhabited islands. On the 6th, in the evening, they anchored at Foosht, in two fathoms

## Foosht.

fathoms water east of the town, and here staid the following day, filling their skins with water.

Foosht is an island of irregular form, about five miles from south to north, and about nine in circumference. It abounds in good fish. There were many kinds, painted with the most beautiful colours in the world; but Mr. Bruce always observed, that the more beautiful the worse they were for eating. There were indeed none good but those that resembled the fish of the north in their form, and plainness of their colours. Foosht is low and sandy on the south; and on the north is a black hill or cape of no considerable height, that may be seen at four leagues off. It has two watering-places; one on the east of the island, where our travellers were, the other on the west. The water there is bitter, but it had been troubled by a number of little barks that had been taking in water just before. The manner of filling the goat-skins being a very slovenly one, they take up much of the mud along with it, but the water was found to be excellent, after it had settled two or three days when it came on board, it was as black as ink. It was incomparably the best water they had drunk since that of the Nile.

This island is covered with a kind of bent grass, which want of rain, and the constant feeding of the few goats that are kept here, prevent from growing to any height. The end of the island, near the north cape, sounds very hollow, underneath, like Solfaterra, near Naples; and as quantities of punic stones are found here, there is great appearance that the black hill was once a volcano. Several large shells from the fish called Bisser, some of them twenty inches long, are seen turned upon their faces, on the surface of large stones, of ten or twelve ton weight. These shells are sunk into the stones, as if into paste, and the stone raised round about, so as to conceal the edge of the shell; a proof that this stone has, some time lately, been soft or liquefied.

For, had it been long ago, the weather and sun would have worn the surface of the shell; but it seems perfectly entire, and is set in that hard brown rock, as the stone of a ring is in a golden chasing.

The inhabitants of Foosht are poor fishermen, of the same degree of blackness as those between Heli and Djezan; like them too, they were naked, or had only a rag about their waist. Their faces are neither stained nor painted. They catch a quantity of fish called Seajan, which they carry to Loheia, and exchange for dora and Indian corn, for they have no bread, but what is procured this way. They also have a flat fish, with a long tail to it, whose skin is a species of shagreen, with which the handles of knives and swords are made. Pearls too are found here, but neither large nor of a good water; on the other hand, they are not dear; they are the produce of various species of shells, all bivalves.

The town consists of about thirty huts, built with faggots of bent grass or spartum; and these are supported within by a few sticks, and thatched with the grass, of which they are built. The inhabitants seemed to be much terrified at seeing Mr. Bruce and his party come ashore all armed. This was not done out of fear of them; but, as he intended to stay on shore all night, he wished to be in a situation to defend himself against boats of strollers from the main. The saint, or Marabout, upon seeing our traveller near him, fell flat upon his face, where he lay for a quarter of an hour; nor would he get up till the guns, which had occasioned his fears, were ordered to be immediately sent on board.

Baccalan is an island, low, long, and as broad as Foosht, inhabited by fishermen; without water in summer, which is then brought from Foosht, but in winter they preserve the rain-water in cisterns. These were built in ancient times, when this was a place of importance for the fishing of pearls, and they are in perfect repair to this day; neither the cement of  
the

## An Abyssinian ghost.

the work, nor the stucco within, having at all suffered. Very violent showers fall here from the end of October to the beginning of March, but at certain intervals.

All the islands on this east-side of the channel belong to the Sherriffe Djezan Boorish, but none are inhabited except Baccalan and Foosht. This last island is the most convenient watering-place for ships, bound up the channel from Jibbel Teir, from which it bears N. E. by E.  $\frac{3}{4}$  E. by the compass, nineteen leagues distant.

Having laid in a supply of water they all repaired on board in the evening of the 7th, when Mr. Bruce was made acquainted with a singular disaster which had happened to the vessel during his absence.

An Abyssinian, who died on board, and who had been buried upon their coming out from Loheia bay, had been seen upon the bowsprit for two nights, and had terrified the sailors very much; even the Rais had not been a little alarmed; and, though he could not directly say that he had seen him, yet, after Mr. Bruce was in bed on the 7th, he complained seriously to him of the bad consequences it would produce if a gale of wind was to rise, and the ghost was to keep his place there; he desired him to come forward and speak to him. "My good Rais, (said Mr. Bruce,) I am exceedingly tired, and my head aches much with the sun, which hath been very violent to-day. You know the Abyssinian paid for his passage; and, if he does not overload the ship, (and I apprehend he should be lighter than when we took him on board,) I do not think that, in justice or equity, either you or I can hinder the ghost from continuing his voyage to Abyssinia, as we cannot judge what serious business he may have there." The Rais began to bless himself that he did not know any thing of his affairs.— "Then, (said Mr. Bruce,) if you do not find he makes the vessel too heavy before, do not molest him; because, certainly, if he was to come into any

## An Abyssinian ghost.

other part of the ship, or if he was to insist to sit in the middle of you, (in the disposition that you all are,) he would be a greater inconvenience to you than in his present post." The Rais began again to bless himself, repeating a verse of the *Koran*; "bismilla sheitan rejem," in the name of God keep the devil far from me. "Now, Rais, (said Mr. Bruce) if he does no harm, you will let him ride upon the bowsprit till he is tired, or till he come to Masuah; for I swear to you, unless he hurts or troubles us, I do not think I have any obligation to get out of my bed to molest him; only see that he carries nothing off with him." The Rais now seemed to be exceedingly offended, and said, "For his part, he did not care for his life more than any other man on board; if it was not from fear of a gale of wind, he might ride on the bowsprit and be d——n'd; but that he had always heard learned people could speak to ghosts." "Will you be so good, Rais, (replied our traveller) to step forward, and tell him, that I am going to drink coffee, and should be glad if he would walk into the cabin, and say any thing he has to communicate to me, if he is a Christian, and if not, to Mahomet Gibberti." The Rais went out; but, as Mr. Bruce's servant told him, he would neither go himself, nor could get any person to go to the ghost for him. Here the matter ended for the present.

Early on the 8th, they sailed from Foosht to Zimmer, a much smaller island without inhabitants, and without water, though, by the cisterns which still remain, and are sixty yards square, hewed out of the solid rock, we may imagine this was once a place of consequence: rain in abundance, at certain seasons, still falls there. It is covered with young plants of rack tree, whose property it is to vegetate in salt water. The old trees had been cut down; but there was a considerable number of Saicl, or Acacia trees.

Although Zimmer is said to be without water, yet there are antelopes upon it, as also hyænas in number;

and



## Zimmer—Shark-fighting.

and it is therefore probable that there is water in some subterraneous caves or cleft of the rocks, unknown to the Arabs or fishermen, without which these animals could not subsist. It is probable, the antelopes were brought over from Arabia for the Sherriffe's pleasure, or those of his friends, if they did not swim from the main, and an enemy afterwards brought the hyæna to disappoint that amusement. Be that as it will, though Mr. Bruce did not see the animals, yet he observed the dung of each of them upon the sand, and in the cisterns; so the fact does not rest wholly upon the veracity of the boatmen.

In the night they sailed from Zimmer, and early on the 9th the island Ralpa bore N. E. by E. distant about two leagues. At seven, in the morning of the 10th, Jibbel Teir, (which till then had been covered with a mist,) appeared to view. All this forenoon their vessel had been surrounded with a prodigious number of sharks, of the hammer-headed kind. The Rais had fitted a large harpoon with a long line, and Mr. Bruce went to the bowsprit to wait for one of the sharks. At length he struck the largest shark, about a foot from the head, with such force, that the whole iron was buried in his body. He shuddered, as a person does when cold, and shook the shaft of the harpoon out of the socket, the weapon being made so on purpose; the shaft fell across, kept fixt to the line, and served as a float to bring him up when he dived, and impeded him when he swam. No salmon fisher ever saw finer sport with a fish and a rod. He had thirty fathom of line out, and they had thirty fathom more ready to give him. He never dived, but sailed round the vessel like a ship, always keeping part of his back above water. The Rais begged they would not pull him, but give him as much more line as he wanted; and indeed they saw it was the weight of the line that galled him, for he went round the vessel without seeking to go farther from them. At last he came nearer,

nearer, upon their gathering up the line; and upon gently pulling it after, they brought him alongside, till they fastened a strong boat-hook in his throat: a man swung upon a cord was now let down to cut his tail, while hanging on the ship's side; but he was, if not absolutely dead, without the power of doing harm. He was eleven feet seven inches from his snout to the tail, and nearly four feet round in the thickest part of him. He had in him a dolphin very lately swallowed, and about half a yard of blue cloth. He was the largest the Rais had ever seen, either in the Red Sea or the Indian Ocean.

About twenty minutes before twelve o'clock they were about four leagues distant from the island. Jibbel Teir, or the Mountain of the Bird, is called by others Jibbel Douhan, or the Mountain of Smoke; for though in the middle of the sea, it is a volcano, which throws out fire; and though nearly extinguished, it smokes to this day. It was called Ornéon in Ptolemy, the Bird-Island, the same as Jibbel Teir. It is likewise called Sheban, from the white spot at the top of it, which seems to be sulphur, and a part seems to have fallen in, and to have enlarged the crater on this side. The island is four miles from south to north, has a peak in form of a pyramid in the middle of it, and is about a quarter of a mile high. It descends, equally on both sides, to the sea; has four openings at the top, which vent smoke; and sometimes, in strong southerly winds, it is said to throw out fire. There was no such appearance when our travellers passed it. The island is perfectly desert, being covered with sulphur and pumice-stones.

Six leagues E. by S. of this island there is a dangerous shoal with great overfalls, on which a French ship struck in the year 1751, and was saved with very great difficulty. Jibbel Teir is the point from which all ships going to Jidda take their departure, after

The vessel strikes upon a rock.

after sailing from Mocha, and passing ~~one~~ islands to the southward.

They left Jibbel Tera on the 11th, with little wind at west; but toward mid-day it freshened as usual, and turned northward to N. N. E. They were now in mid-channel, so that they stood on straight for Dabalac till half past four, when a boy, who went aloft, saw four islands in a direction N. W. by W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  west. They were standing on with a fresh breeze, and all their sails full: but about seven in the evening they struck upon a reef of coral rocks.

Arabs are cowards in all sudden dangers; for they consider every accident as the will of providence, and therefore not to be avoided. The Arab sailors were for immediately taking to the boat; while the Abyssinians were for cutting up the planks and wood of the inside of the vessel, and making her a raft. A violent dispute ensued, and after that a battle, when night overtook them, still fast upon the rock. The Rais and Yasine, a Moor, however, calmed the riot, when Mr. Bruce begged the passengers would hear him. "You all know," said he, "or should know, that the boat is mine; as I bought her with my money, for the safety and accommodation of myself and servants; you know, likewise, that I and my men are all well armed, while you are naked; therefore do not imagine that we will suffer any of you to enter that boat, and save your lives at the expense of ours. On this vessel of the Rais is your dependence; in it you are to be saved or to perish: therefore all hands to work, and get the vessel off, while it is calm; if she had been materially damaged, she had been sunk before now." They all seemed on this to take courage, and said they hoped he would not leave them. He told them, if they would be men, he would not leave them while there was a bit of the vessel together.

The boat was immediately launched, and one of Mr. Bruce's servants, the Rais, and two sailors, were  
put

The vessel is got off the rock.

put on board. They were soon upon the bank, where the two sailors got ~~out~~ who cut their feet at first upon the white coral, but afterwards got firmer footing. They attempted to push the ship backwards, but she would not move. Poles and handspikes were tried in order to stir her, but these were not long enough. In a word, there was no appearance of getting her off before morning, when they knew the wind would rise, and it was to be feared she would then be dashed to pieces. Other efforts were then used, and a great cry was set up, that she began to move. A little after, a gentle wind just made itself felt from the east; and the cry from the Rais was, "Hoist the fore-sail, and put it a back." This being immediately done, and a gentle breeze filling the fore-sail at this time, they all pushed, and the vessel slid gently off, free from the shoal. Mr. Bruce did not partake of the general joy so suddenly as the others did. He still had some fears that a plank might have been started, but was soon convinced of the advantage possessed by a vessel that is sewed over one that is nailed together, as she was not only uninjured but made very little water. The courage and readiness displayed by Yasmine on this occasion gained him the esteem of Mr. Bruce, whose consideration for him continued to increase ever afterwards till his departure from Abyssinia.

During the hurry of this transaction there was a circumstance that excited some surprize. The ghost was supposed to be again seen on the bowsprit, as if pushing the vessel ashore. Mr. Bruce inquired who the persons were that had seen him. Two Moors of Hamazen were the first that perceived him, and afterwards a great part of the crew had been brought to believe the reality of this vision. Mr. Bruce called them forward to examine them before the Rais and Mahomet Gibberti, and they declared that, during the night, they had seen him go and come several times; once, he was pushing against  
the

## Detection of the ghost.

the boltsprit, another time he was pulling upon the rope, as if he had an anchor ashore; after this he had a very long pole, or stick, in his hand, but it seemed heavy and stiff, as if it had been made of iron, and when the vessel began to move, he turned into a small but blue flame, ran along the gunnel on the larboard side of the ship; and upon the vessel going off, he disappeared. 'Now,' said Mr. Bruce, 'it is plain by this change of shape, that he has left us for ever; let us therefore see whether he has done us any harm or not. Have any of you any baggage stowed forwards?' The strangers answered, 'Yes, it is all there.' 'Then,' said Mr. Bruce 'go forward, and see if every man has got his own.' They did this without loss of time, when a great noise and confusion ensued; every one was plundered of something, stibium, nails, brass wire, incense, and beads; in short, all the precious part of their little stores was stolen. All the passengers were now in the utmost despair, and began to charge the sailors. 'I appeal to you, Yasine and Mahomet Gibberti,' said Mr. Bruce, 'whether these two Moors who saw him oftenest, and were most intimate with him, have not a chance of knowing where the things are hid. Then go, Yasine, with the Rais, and examine that part of the ship where the Moors slept, while I keep them here.'" Before the search began, however, one of them told Yasine where every thing was, and accordingly all was found and restored.

In the morning of the 12th, and at four in the afternoon, they saw land, which the pilot said was the S. end of Dahalac: it bore W. by S. and was distant about nine leagues. The following day they coasted along the east side of the island; and after having again violently struck on the coral rocks in the entry, at sunset they anchored in the harbour of Dobelew.

This harbour is in form circular, and sufficiently defended from all winds, but its entrance is too narrow, and within it is full of rocks.

## Island of Dahalac.

The village itself lies three miles south-west of the harbour. It consists of about eighty houses, built of stone drawn from the sea; these calcine like shells, and make good mortar enough, as well as materials for building before burning. All the houses are covered with bent-grass, like those of Arabia.

The whole length of the island, whose direction is from north-west to south-east, is thirty-seven miles, and its greater breadth eighteen, which agreed within a very little with the account given by the inhabitants, who made its length indeed something more.

Dahalac is by far the largest island in the Red Sea. It is low and even, the soil fixed gravel and white sand, mixed with shells and other marine productions. It is destitute of all sorts of herbage, at least in summer, except a small quantity of bent-grass, just sufficient to feed the few antelopes and goats that are on the island. There is a very beautiful species of this last animal found here, small, short-haired, with thin black sharp horns, having rings upon them, and they are very swift of foot.

This island is in many places, covered with large plantations of acacia trees, which grow to no height, seldom above eight feet, but spread wide, and turn flat at top, probably by the influence of the wind from the sea. Though in the neighborhood of Abyssinia, Dahalac does not partake of its seasons: no rain falls here, from the end of March to the beginning of October; but, in the intermediate months, especially December, January, and February, there are violent showers for twelve hours at a time, which deluge the island, and fill the cisterns so as to serve all next summer; for there are no hills nor mountains in Dahalac, and consequently no springs. These cisterns alone preserve the water, and of them there yet remain three hundred and seventy, all hewn out of the solid rock. They are said to be the works of the Persians; it is more probable they were those of the first Ptolemies. But whoever were the construc-

---

---

Island of Dahalac.

---

---

tors of these magnificent reservoirs, they were a very different people from those that now possess them, who have not industry enough to keep one of three hundred and seventy clear for the use of man. All of them are open to every sort of animal, and half full of the filth they leave there after drinking and washing in them. The water of Dobelew, and Irwèe, tasted strong of musk, from the dung of the goats and antelopes, and the smell before you drink it is more nauseous than the taste; yet one of these cisterns, cleaned and shut up with a door, might afford them wholesome sweet water all the year round.

After the rains fall, a prodigious quantity of grass immediately springs up; and the goats give the inhabitants milk, which in winter is the principal part of their subsistence, for they neither plow nor sow; all their employment is to work the vessels which trade to the different parts of the coast. One half of the inhabitants is constantly on the Arabian side, and by their labour is enabled to furnish with dora (millet or Indian corn) and other provisions, the other half who stay at home; and when their time is expired, they are relieved by the other half, and supplied with necessaries in their turn. But the sustenance of the poorer sort is entirely shell and other fish. Their wives and daughters are very bold, and expert fishermen. Several of them, entirely naked, swam off to our vessel before we came to an anchor, begging handfuls of wheat, rice, or dora. They are very importunate and sturdy beggars, and not easily put off with denials. Those miserable people, who live in the villages not frequented by barks from Arabia, are sometimes a whole year without tasting bread. Yet such is their attachment to the place of their nativity, that they prefer living in this bare barren parched spot, almost in want of necessaries of every kind, especially of these essential ones, bread and water, to those pleasant and plentiful countries on both sides of them.

## Island of Dahalac.

There are twelve villages, or towns, in Dahalac, little different in size from Dobelew; each has a plantation of doom-trees round it, which furnish the only manufacture in the island. The leaves of this tree, when dried, are of a glossy white, which might very easily be mistaken for sattin; of these they make baskets of surprising beauty and neatness, staining part of the leaves with red or black, and working them into figures very artificially. Some of these, resembling straw-baskets, have been found to continue full of water for twenty-four hours, without one drop coming through. They sell these at Loheia and Jidda, the largest of them for four commesh, or sixpence. This is the employment, or rather amusement, of the men who stay at home; for they work but very moderately at it, and all of them indeed take special care not to prejudice their health by any kind of fatigue from industry.

People of the better sort, such as the Shekh and his relations, men privileged to be idle, and never exposed to the sun, are of a brown complexion, not darker than the inhabitants of Loheia. But the common sort employed in fishing, and those who go constantly to sea, are not indeed black, but red, and little darker than the colour of new mahogany. There are, besides, blacks among them, who come from Arkeeko and the main, but even these, upon marrying, grow less black in a generation.

The inhabitants of Dahalac seemed to be a simple, timid, and inoffensive, people. It is the only part of Africa or Arabia, (call it which you please,) where you see no one carry arms of any kind; neither gun, knife, nor sword, is to be seen in the hands of any one. Whereas, at Loheia, and on all the coast of Arabia, and more particularly at Yambo, every person goes armed; even the porters, naked and groaning under the weight of their burden, and the heat of the day, have a leather belt, in which they carry a crooked knife, so monstrously long, that it needs a particular motion



## Island of Dahalac.

motion and address in walking, not to lame the bearer. This was not always the case at Dahalac; for several of the Portuguese, on their first arrival here were murdered, and the island often treated ill, in revenge, by the armaments of that nation. The men seem healthy. They told Mr. Bruce that they had no diseases among them, except sometimes in spring, when the boats of Yemen and Jidda bring the small-pox among them and very few escape with life that are infected. He could not observe a man among them that seemed to be sixty years old, from which he infers they are not long liverers, though the air should be healthy, as being near the channel, and as they have the north wind all summer which moderates the heat.

Of all the islands which Mr. Bruce had visited on this side the channel, Dahalac alone is inhabited. It depends, as do all the rest, upon Masuah, and is conferred by a firman from the Grand Signior, on the Basha of Jidda; and, from him, on Metical Aga, then on the Naybe and his servants. The revenue of this governor consists in a goat brought to him monthly by each of the twelve villages. Every vessel, that puts in there for Masuah, pays him also a pound of coffee, and every one from Arabia a dollar or pataka. No sort of small money is current at Dahalac, excepting Venetian glass-beads, old and new, of all sizes and colours, broken and whole.

There are neither horses, dogs, sheep, cows, nor any sort of quadruped, but goats, asses, a few half-starved camels, and antelopes at Dahalac, which last are very numerous. The inhabitants have no knowledge of fire-arms; and there are no dogs, nor beasts of prey, in the island to kill them; they catch indeed some few of them in traps.

On Mr. Bruce's arrival at Dahalac, on the 14th, he saw swallows there; and, on the 16th, they were all gone. On his landing at Masuah, on the 19th, he saw a few; the 21st and 22d they were in great flocks; on the 2d of October they were all gone. It

was

---

Departure from Dahalac, and arrival at Masuah.

---

was the blue long-tailed swallow, with the flat head ; but there was, likewise, the English martin, black, and darkish grey in the body, with a white breast.

The language at Dahalac is that of the *Shepherds* ; Arabic too is spoken by most of the inhabitants. From this island may be seen the high mountains of Habesh, running in an even ridge like a wall, parallel to the coast, and down to Suakem.

Having examined the vessel, and found that she had received no damage, they provided water (bad as it was) for the remainder of their voyage, and sailed from Dobelew on the 17th ; but the wind being unfavourable, they came to an anchor, near five o'clock, in ten fathom water, about three leagues from that port. The next day they made as much progress as they could, but were forced to come to an anchor at half past four in the morning. Here is a very shallow and narrow passage called Bogaz (signifying shallow) barely one fathom and a half ; it is between the island Dahalac and the S. point of the island of Noora, about forty fathom broad, and on each side full of dangerous rocks.

The tide now entered with an unusual force, and ran more like the Nile, or a torrent, or stream conducted to turn a mill, than the sea, or the effects of a tide. At half past one o'clock, there was water enough to pass ; and they soon were hurried through it by the violence of the current, driving them in a manner truly tremendous.

They passed between Ras Antalou, the North Cape of Dahalac, and the small island Dahalottom, which has some trees upon it. Here is also the tomb of Shekh Abou Gafar, mentioned by Poncelet, in his voyage, who mistakes the name of the saint for that of the island.

On the 19th, at five in the afternoon, they came to an anchor in the harbour of Masuah.

---

---



---

### CHAPTER III.

---



---

Transactions at Masuah—Conferences with Achmet and the Naybe—Treachery of the latter—Description of Masuah and Arkeeko—Diseases, Trade, &c.—Cursory Observations—Journey from Arkeeko to Dixan, and from Dixan to Adowa—Fremona—Ruins of Axum—Arrival at Sirè—Journey from Sirè to Adergey—Transactions there—Journey over Lamalmon to Gondar, the capital of Abyssinia, and transactions there.

**MASUAH**, or the harbour of the Shepherds, is a small island on the Abyssinian shore, having an excellent harbour, and water deep enough for ships of any size to the very edge of the island: here they may ride in the utmost security, from whatever point, or with whatever degree of strength, the wind blows. The island itself is very small, scarcely three quarters of a mile in length, and about half that in breadth; one-third occupied by houses, one by cisterns to receive the rain-water, and the last is reserved for burying the dead.

This island was a place of much resort as long as commerce flourished; but it fell into obscurity very suddenly, under the oppression of the Turks, who put the finishing hand to the ruin of the India trade in the Red Sea, begun some years before by the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope, and the settlements made by the Portuguese on the continent of India.

After the Turks had obtained possession of Masuah, it was at first governed by a basha sent from Constantinople. From that point the conquest of Abyssinia was attempted, but always without success; till at length losing its value as a garrison, it was no longer thought worth while to keep up such an expensive establishment as that of a bachalick at this place. The principal auxiliaries of the Turks, when they conquered the island, was a pastoral tribe of Mahometans, inhabiting the Coast of the Red Sea, called Bellowee.

In reward for their assistance, the Turks invested their chief with the civil government of Masuah and its territory, under the title of Naybe; and when the basha was withdrawn, this officer remained in fact the sovereign of the place; though, to save appearances, he was required to pay a yearly tribute to the Porte. The pay of the Janizaries established in garrison in the island was continued; these men having intermarried with women of the country, were succeeded in their posts by their children, who having at length become Moors, and natives of Masuah, were equally subject with the other inhabitants to the influence of the Naybe. The latter considering the great distance between him and the nearest Turkish garrisons in Arabia; sensible also how much he was in the power of his enemies and nearest neighbours, the Abyssinians; began to think it the most prudent plan to make some advances to secure the good-will of these from whom he had most to fear. It was accordingly agreed that on condition of paying one half of the customs to the King of Abyssinia, he should enjoy his government unmolested; for Masuah is absolutely destitute of water, neither can it be supplied with provisions of any kind, except from the mountainous country of Abyssinia.

Having thus secured the friendship of that power, the Naybe began by degrees to withdraw himself from the payment of tribute to the Basha of Jidda, to whose government his island had been annexed by the Porte. Taking the like advantage of the circumstances of Abyssinia, whenever that country was distracted by civil dissensions, or ruled by a weak government, he withheld the share of the customs he had agreed to pay. Such was the state of affairs when Mr. Bruce arrived at Masuah. A great revolution had recently happened in Abyssinia, of which Ras Michael, governor of the province of Tigré, had been the principal author. When he was called to Gondar, the capital of the kingdom, and appointed prime-minister, Tigré

continued drained of troops, and without a governor. Hatze Hannes, the new king whom Michael had placed upon the throne after the murder of Joas, his predecessor, was not a man likely to infuse vigour into the administration. Hannes was more than seventy years of age at his accession; and Michael, his minister, within a few years of eighty, and so lame as to be scarcely able to stand. The Naybe judged of the debility of the Abyssinian government from these circumstances; but in this conclusion he was mistaken. Already had Michael intimated to him, that he would, the next campaign, lay waste Arkeeko and Masuah, till they should be as desert as the adjacent wilds of Samhar; but though he had all his life been remarkable for keeping promises of this kind, the Naybe had not shewn any public mark of fear, or remitted any tribute, either to the King of Abyssinia, or the Basha of Jidda.

The basha, on the other hand, was not indifferent to his own interest; and to bring about the payment, had made an agreement with an officer in high credit with the Sheriffe of Mecca. This man, named Metical Aga, was originally an Abyssinian slave, who by his address had raised himself to the post of sword-bearer to the sheriffe, and was in fact absolute in his dominions. He was, moreover, a great friend of Michael, Governor of Tigré, and had supplied him with large quantities of arms and ammunition for his last campaign against the King of Gondar. The basha had employed Metical Aga, to inform Michael of the treatment which he had received from the Naybe, desiring his assistance to compel him to pay the tribute. He not only intimated to the Naybe that he had taken this step, but assured him that the very next year he would give orders for the seizure of all such Mahometan merchants and goods as should come from Masuah to Arabia, either for the purposes of religion or trade: and with this message he sent the firman from Constantinople,

---

Mr. Bruce in great danger of being assassinated.

---

stantinople, requiring the return both of tribute and presents.

Mahomet Gibberti, the servant of Metical Aga, had accompanied Mr. Bruce in the boat to Masuah; but Abdelcader, who carried the message and firman, and who was governor of the island of Dahalac, had sailed at the same time in another vessel, and had witnessed the honours paid to our traveller at his departure from Jidda. He proclaimed what he had seen with the exaggeration customary in his country; and reported at Masuah, that a prince, a near relation of the King of England, who was no trader, but only came to visit countries and people, might shortly be expected at that place. Many were the consultations held between the Naybe and his counsellors to decide what was to be done with this prince. Some were for adopting the most expeditious, and what had long been the usual method of treating strangers in this island, that is to say, putting him to death, and dividing his property among the garrison; while others insisted that it would be prudent to wait and see what letters he had from Arabia to Abyssinia, lest they should aggravate the storm just ready to break upon them, on the part of Metical Aga, and Michael Suhul. Achmet, the Naybe's nephew, alone, loudly protested against the folly and injustice of offering any violence to the expected stranger, whose very rank ought to be a sufficient protection in every place where there was any government whatever. He said that enough of strangers' blood had already been shed at Masuah for the purposes of rapine; and he believed that a curse and poverty had followed the crime. He farther represented with what facility the European ships, coming to Jidda, might revenge any injury done to Mr. Bruce, as half the number of guns fired in compliment to him, would be sufficient to destroy them all, and level both Arkeeko and Masuah with the ground. Achmet was not only a relative to the Naybe,

†

but

---

He arrives at Masuah.

---

but heir apparent to his dignity; his influence prevailed; and it was agreed that to him should be left the decision of Mr. Bruce's fate.

On the 19th of September, 1769, our traveller arrived at Masuah, very much tired of the sea, and desirous to land. But, as it was evening, he thought it advisable to sleep on board that night, that he might have a whole day (as the first is always a busy one) before him, and receive in the night any intelligence from friends who might not choose to venture to come openly to see him in the day, at least before the determination of the Naybe had been heard concerning him.

Mahomet Gibberti, whom Mr. Bruce had perfectly secured, and who was fully acquainted with his suspicions concerning the Naybe, went on shore the same evening; and being himself an Abyssinian, and having connexions in Masuah, he found means that night to dispatch to Adowa, the capital of Tigré, those letters which Mr. Bruce knew to be of the greatest importance. He informed Janni, a confidential servant of Michael, and superintendent of the custom-house at Adowa, of his arrival at Masuah, and that he had letters from Metical Aga, to the Naybe and the Ras. He also wrote to him in Greek, that he was afraid of the Naybe, begging him to send without loss of time some trusty person as a protector, or at least to witness what might befall him: and to acquaint the court of Abyssinia with these circumstances.

Next day a person came from Mahomet Gibberti to conduct Mr. Bruce on shore.

The Naybe, who was at Arkeeko, and Achmet, had therefore come down to receive the duties of the merchandise on board the vessel which brought Mr. Bruce. There were two elbow chairs, placed in the middle of the market-place. Achmet sat on one of them, while the several officers opened the bales and packages before him; the other chair on his left hand was empty. He was dressed all in white, in a long Banian habit of muslin, and a close-bodied frock reach-

---

 His interview with Achmet,
 

---

ing to his ancles, much like the white frock and petticoat which young children wear in England. This species of dress did not in any way suit Achmet's shape or size; but, it seems, he meant to be in gala. As soon as Mr. Bruce came in sight of him, our traveller doubled his pace: Mahomet Gibberti's servant whispered to him not to kiss his hand, which he intended to have done. Achmet stood up, just as he arrived within arm's length of him; when they touched each other's hands, carried their fingers to their lips, then laid their hands across their breasts; Mr. Bruce pronounced the salutation of the inferior *Salam Alicum!* "Peace be between us;" to which he answered immediately, *Alicum Salam!* "There is peace between us." He pointed to the chair, which our traveller declined; but he obliged him to sit down.

In these countries the greater the honour that is shewn you at the first meeting, the more considerable present is expected. Achmet made a sign to bring coffee directly, as the immediate offering of meat or drink is an assurance that your life is not in danger. He began with an air that seemed rather serious: "We have expected you here some time ago, but thought you had changed your mind, and was gone to India." "Since sailing from Jidda," replied Bruce, "I have been in Arabia Felix, the Gulf of Mocha, and crossed last from Loheia."—"Are you not afraid," said he, "so thinly attended, to venture upon these long and dangerous voyages?" "The countries," answered Mr. Bruce, "where I have been, are either subject to the Emperor of Constantinople, whose firman I have now the honour to present you, or to the regency of Cairo, and porte of Janizaries—here are their letters—or to the Sheriffe of Mecca. To you, Sir, I present the sheriffe's letter; and, besides these, one from Metical Aga, your friend, who, depending on your character, assured me this alone would be sufficient to preserve me from ill-usage so long as I did no wrong; as for the dangers of the road





The Actor's Dress - The Actor's Dress - The Actor's Dress



---

Who treats him in the most hospitable manner.

---

road from banditti and lawless persons, my servants are veteran soldiers, tried and exercised from their infancy in arms, and I value not the superior number of cowardly and disorderly persons." He then returned Mr. Bruce the letters, saying, "You will give these to the Naybe to-morrow; I will keep Metical's letter, as it is to me, and will read it at home." He put it accordingly in his bosom; and having finished coffee, our traveller rose to take his leave, and was presently wetted to the skin by deluges of orange-flower-water, showered upon him from the right and left, by two of Achmet's attendants, from silver bottles.

A very decent house had been provided; which Mr. Bruce had no sooner entered, than a large dinner was sent by Achmet, with a profusion of lemons, and good fresh water, now become one of the greatest delicacies in life; soon after, his baggage was all sent unopened; with which Mr. Bruce was very well pleased, being afraid lest any injury might be done to his clock, telescopes, or quadrant, by the violent manner in which the ignorant people might satisfy their curiosity.

Late in the evening Mr. Bruce received a visit from Achmet, who wished to be more particularly informed concerning our traveller's character and views. These enquiries being answered in a satisfactory manner, Mr. Bruce said that he had been taught to rely in a particular manner on his visitor as a friend, in which quality he wished to offer him a separate though small acknowledgment. He therefore requested his acceptance of a pair of pistols; but as Achmet wished this transaction to remain secret, he declined taking them at that time. "Let the pistols remain with you," said he, "and shew them to nobody, till I send you a man, to whom you may say any thing, and he shall go between you and me; for there is in this place a number of devils, not men; but *Ullah Kerim*—God is great. The person

---

The Naybe receives the caftan of Masuah.

---

person that brings you dry dates, in an Indian handkerchief, and an earthen bottle to drink your water out of, give him the pistols." Accordingly, on the 20th, a female slave came with the proper credentials, and received the present destined for Achmet.

In the morning of the 21st, the Naybe came from Arkeeko. The usual way is by sea; it is about two leagues straight across the bay, but somewhat more by land. The passage from the main is on the north side of the island, which is not above a quarter of a mile broad; there is a large cistern for rain-water on the land-side, where you embark across. He was poorly attended by three or four servants, miserably mounted, and about forty naked savages on foot, armed with short lances and crooked knives. The drum beat before him all the way from Arkeeko to Masuah. Upon entering the boat, the drum on the land-side ceased, and those, in what is called the Castle of Masuah, began. The castle is a small clay hut, and in it one swivel gun, which is not mounted, but lies upon the ground, and is fired always with great trepidation and some danger. The drums are earthen jars, such as they send butter into Arabia; the mouths of which are covered with a skin, so that a stranger, on seeing two or three of these together, would run a great risk of believing them to be jars of butter, or pickles, carefully covered with oiled parchment. All the procession was in the same stile. The Naybe was dressed in an old shabby Turkish habit much too short for him, and which seemed to have been made about the time of Sultan Selim. He wore also upon his head a Turkish cowke, or high cap, which scarcely admitted any part of his head. In this dress, which on him had a truly ridiculous appearance, he received the caftan, or investiture, of the island of Masuah: and, being thereby representative of the grand signior, he consented that day to be called Omar Aga, in honour of the commission. Two standards of white silk, striped with red, were carried

---

A detailed history of his person.

---

ried before him to the mosque, whence he went to his own house to receive the compliments of his friends. In the afternoon of that day, Mr. Bruce went to pay his respects to him, and found him sitting on a large wooden elbow chair, at the head of two files of naked savages, who made an avenue from his chair to the door. He had nothing upon him but a coarse cotton shirt, so dirty, that it seemed as if all pains to clean it again would be thrown away, and so short that it scarcely reached his knees. He was very tall and lean, his colour black; he had a large mouth and nose; in place of a beard, a very scanty tuft of grey hairs upon the point of his chin; large, dull, and heavy eyes; a kind of malicious, contemptuous smile on his countenance; he was altogether of a most stupid and brutal appearance. His character perfectly corresponded with his figure; for he was a man of mean abilities, cruel to excess, avaricious, and a great drunkard. Our traveller presented his firman. The greatest basha in the Turkish empire would have risen upon seeing it, kissed it, and carried it to his forehead; and Mr. Bruce expected that Omar Aga, for the day he bore that title, and received the caftan, would have shewn this mark of respect to his master. But he did not even receive it into his hands; and pushed it back, saying, 'Do you read it all to me word for word.'—Mr. Bruce told him it was Turkish; that he never learned to read a word of that language.—'Nor I either,' said he; 'and I believe I never shall.' Bruce then delivered the letters from Metical Aga, the Sheriffe, Ali Bey, and the Janizaries. He took them all together in both his hands, and laid them unopened beside him, saying, 'You should have brought a moullah along with you. Do you think I shall read all these letters? Why, it would take me a month.' He then glared upon his visitor with his mouth open, so like an idiot, that it was with the utmost difficulty he kept his gravity, only answering, 'Just as you please; you know best.'

The

---

Masuah nearly depopulated by the small-pox.

---

The Naybe affected at first not to understand Arabic; spoke by an interpreter in the language of Masuah, which is a dialect of Tigré; but seeing that Mr. Bruce understood him in this, he spoke Arabic, and spoke it well. A silence followed this short conversation, and Mr. Bruce took the opportunity to give him his present, with which he did not seem displeased, but rather that it was below him to tell him so; for, without saying a word about it, he asked where the Abuna of Habesh was? and why he tarried so long? Mr. Bruce said, the wars in Upper Egypt had made the roads dangerous; and it was easy to see, Omar longed much to settle accounts with him. Our traveller now took his leave of the Naybe, very little pleased with his reception, and the small account he seemed to make of his letters or of himself.

The inhabitants of Masuah were dying of the small-pox, so that it was feared the living would not be sufficient to bury the dead. The whole island was filled with shrieks and lamentations both night and day. The people at last began to throw the bodies into the sea, which deprived our traveller and his attendants of their great support, fish, of which they had eaten some kinds that were excellent. Mr. Bruce had suppressed his character of physician, fearing lest he should be detained on account of the multitude of sick.

On the 15th of October the Naybe came to Masuah, and dispatched the vessel which brought Mr. Bruce over; and, as if he had only waited till this evidence was out of the way, he, that very night, sent word that our traveller was to prepare him a handsome present. He gave in a long list of particulars to a great amount, which he desired might be divided into three parcels, and presented three several days. One was to be given him as Naybe of Arkeeko; one as Omar Aga, representative of the grand signior; and one for having passed the baggage *gratis*, and unvisited, especially

---

The Naybe's misunderstanding with Mr. Bruce.

---

ally the large quadrant. As the assurance of protection, which Mr. Bruce had received from Achmet, gave him some courage, he answered, 'That, having a firman of the grand signior, and letters from Metical Aga, it was mere generosity should he give him any present at all, either as Naybe or Omar Aga, that he was not a merchant who bought and sold, nor had merchandise on board, therefore had no customs to pay.' Upon this the Naybe sent for Mr. Bruce to his house, where he found him in a violent fury, and many useless words passed on both sides. At last he peremptorily said, that unless Mr. Bruce had three hundred ounces of gold ready to pay him on the following Monday, upon his landing from Arkeeko, he would confine him in a dungeon, without light, air, or meat, till the bones came through his skin for want.—Mr. Bruce turned his back without any answer or salutation, and had scarcely reached home, when a message came from the Naybe, desiring he would send him two bottles of aqua-vitæ. Mr. Bruce gave the servant two bottles of cinnamon-water, which he refused to take till the owner had tasted them; but they were not agreeable to the Naybe, and were therefore returned.

All this time Mr. Bruce very much wondered what was become of Achmet, who, with Mahomet Gibberti, remained at Arkeeko: at last he heard from the Naybe's servant that he was in bed, ill of a fever. Mr. Bruce sent to the Naybe to desire leave to go to Arkeeko, who answered surlily, he might go if he could find a boat; and, indeed, he had taken his measures so well that not a boat would stir for money or persuasion.

On the 29th of October the Naybe again came from Arkeeko to Masuah, and, as Mr. Bruce was told, in very ill humour with him. He soon received a message to attend him, and found him in a large waste room like a barn, and about sixty people with him. This was his divan, or grand council, with all his janizaries and

---

 Appearance of a comet.
 

---

Officers of state, all naked, assembled in parliament. A comet had appeared a few days after his arrival at Masuah; it had been many days visible in Arabia Felix, being then in its perihelion; and, after passing its conjunction with the sun, it now appeared at Masuah early in the evening, receding to its aphelion. Mr. Bruce had been observed watching it with great attention; and the large tubes of the telescopes had given offence to the ignorant people. The first question the Naybe asked, was, What that comet meant, and why it appeared? And before Mr. Bruce could answer him, he again said, ‘The first time it was visible it brought the small-pox, which has killed above a thousand people in Masuah and Arkeeko. It is known that you conversed with it every night at Loheia; it has now followed you again to finish the few that remain, and then you are to carry it into Abyssinia.’ What have you to do with the comet?’

Without giving our traveller leave to speak, the Naybe’s brother Emir, Achmet, then said, ‘That he was informed Mr. Bruce was an engineer going to Michael, governor of Tigré, to teach the Abyssinians to make cannon and gunpowder; that the first attack was to be against Masuah.’ Five or six others spoke much in the same strain; and the Naybe concluded by saying, ‘That he would send Mr. Bruce in chains to Constantinople, unless he went to Hamazen, with his brother Emir Achmet, to the hot-wells there, and that this was the resolution of all the janizaries; for Mr. Bruce had concealed his being a physician.

Mr. Bruce, who had not yet spoken, now enquired if all those attendants were janizaries, and where was their commanding officer? A well-looking elderly man answered that he was Sardar of the janizaries. “If you are Sardar then,” said our traveller, “this firman orders you to protect me. The Naybe is a man of this country, no member of the Ottoman empire.” A general murmur of approbation followed, and Mr. Bruce continued by declaring



## Treachery of the Naybe.

that he never would go to Hamazen, as he suspected that the design of the Naybe and Emir Achmet in wishing to send him thither was to rob and murder him out of sight. "Dog of a Christian!" cried Emir Achmet, putting his hand to his knife, "if the Naybe wanted to murder you, could he not do it here this minute?"—"No," said the Sardar, "he could not; I would not suffer any such thing: Achmet is the stranger's friend, and recommended me to day to see no injury done him; he is ill, or would have been here himself."—"Achmet," resumed Mr. Bruce, "is my friend, and fears God: were I not hindered by the Naybe from seeing him, his sickness would before this time have been removed. I will go to Achmet at Arkeeko, but not to Hamazen, nor ever again to the Naybe here in Masuah. Whatever happens to me must befall me in my own house. Consider what a figure a few naked men will make, the day my countrymen ask the reason of this either here or in Arabia." He then turned his back on the assembly, and without ceremony departed. As he was going he heard a voice say behind him: "A brave man! *Wallah Englese!* True English, by G—d." Our traveller went away in considerable agitation, as it was plain his affairs were coming to a crisis, for good or for evil. He observed, or thought he observed, all the people shun him. He was upon his guard, and did not wish them to come near him; but, turning down into his own gateway, a man passed close by him, saying distinctly in his ear, though in a low voice, first in Tigré and then in Arabic, 'Fear nothing,' or, 'Be not afraid.' This hint, short as it was, gave him no small courage.

Mr. Bruce had scarcely dined, when a servant came with a letter from Achmet at Arkeeko, telling him how ill he had been, and how sorry he was that our traveller did not come to see him, as Mahomet Gibberti had told him he could help him. He requested Mr. Bruce to keep the bearer with him in his house, and

## Indisposition of Achmet.

give him charge of the gate till he could come to Masuah himself. Mr. Bruce now saw through the treachery of the Naybe. He had not, indeed, forbidden him to go and see his nephew, but he had forbidden any boat to carry him; and this our traveller told the servant, who departed the same night for Arkeeko, leaving another man with orders to admit nobody, and advising Mr. Bruce to defend himself should any person attempt to force an entrance.

About 12 o'clock at night a man came to the door, and desired to be admitted; which request was refused without any ceremony. Then came two or three more, in the name of Achmet, who were told by the servant that they would not be admitted. They then asked to speak with Mr. Bruce; and grew very tumultuous, pressing with their backs against the door. When Mr. Bruce (who had now acquired some confidence) came to them, a young man among them, said he, was son to Emir Achmet, and that his father and some friends were coming to drink a glass of arracky (for so they call brandy) with him. Our traveller told him his resolution was not to admit either Emir Achmet, or any other person at night, and that he never drank arracky. They attempted again to force open the door, which was strongly barricaded; but as there were cracks in it, Mr. Bruce put the point of a sword through one of them, desiring them to be cautious of hurting themselves upon the iron spikes. Still they attempted to force open the door, when the servant told them, that Achmet, when he left them the charge of that door, had ordered them to fire upon all who offered to force an entrance at night. This menace had the desired effect, and they soon retired.

On the 4th of November, the servant of Achmet returned in a boat from Arkeeko, and with him four janizaries. Achmet was not yet well, and was very desirous to see Mr. Bruce. He suspected that he was either poisoned or bewitched, and had tried many charms without effect. Our traveller arrived at Arkeeko

---

Achmet's indisposition removed by Mr. Bruce.

---

keeko about eleven, passed the door of the Naybe without challenge, and found Achmet in his own house, ill of an intermitting fever, under the very worst of regimens. His head ached violently. Mr. Bruce gave him proper remedies to ease his pains and his stomach, and the next morning began with bark. He staid here till the 6th in the morning, at which time Achmet was free from the fever. Mr. Bruce left him, however, some doses to prevent its return; and Achmet told him on the 7th, he would come with boats and men to bring him and his baggage to Arkeeko, and deliver him from the bondage of Masuah.

On the 6th, in the morning, while at breakfast, Mr. Bruce was told that three servants had arrived from Tigré; one from Janni, a young man and slave, who spoke and wrote Greek perfectly; the other two servants were Ras Michael's, or rather the king's, both wearing the red short cloak lined and turned up with mazarine blue, which is the badge of the king's servant, and is called *shalaka*. Ras Michael's letters to the Naybe were very short. He ordered him to furnish Mr. Bruce with necessaries, and dispatch him without loss of time.

In the afternoon Mr. Bruce embarked for Masuah. At the shore he received a message from the Naybe to come and speak to him; but he returned for answer, it was impossible, as he was obliged to go to Masuah to get medicines for his nephew Achmet. At eight o'clock he reached the island, where he completed his observations, and prepared unmolested for his departure from a spot infamous for the quantity of Christian blood shed there on treacherous pretences.

The houses of Masuah are, in general, built of poles and bent grass, as in the towns of Arabia; but, besides these, there are about twenty of stone, six or eight of which are two stories each; though the second seldom consists of more than one room, and that

that one generally not a large one. The stones are drawn out of the sea, as at Dahalac ; and in these we see the beds of that mussel, or shell-fish, found to be contained in the solid rock at Mahon, called *Dattoli da mare*, or sea-dates, the fish of which Mr. Bruce never saw in the Red Sea ; though there is no doubt they might be found in the rocky islands about Masuah, if the rocks were broken for them.

Although Masuah is situated in the very entrance of Abyssinia, a very plentiful country, yet all the necessaries of life are scarce and dear. Their quality, too, is very indifferent. This is owing to the difficulty, expense, and danger, of carrying the several articles through the desert flat country, called Samhar, which lies between Arkeeko and the mountains of Abyssinia ; as well as to the extortions exercised by the Naybe, who takes, under the name of customs, whatever part he pleases of the goods and provisions brought to that island : by which means the profit of the seller is so small as not to be worth the pains and risk of bringing it.

A considerable trade is carried on at Masuah, notwithstanding these inconveniences, narrow and confined as the island is, and violent and unjust as is the government. But it is all done in a slovenly manner, and for articles where a small capital is invested. Property here is too precarious to risk a venture in valuable commodities, where the hand of power enters into every transaction.

The goods imported from the Arabian side are blue cotton, Surat cloths, and cochineal ditto, called Kermis, fine cloth from different markets in India ; coarse white cotton cloths from Yemen ; cotton unspun from ditto in bales ; Venetian beads, crystal, drinking, and looking-glass ; and cohol, or crude antimony. These three last articles come in great quantities from Cairo, first in the coffee-ships to Jidda, and then in small barks over to this port. Old copper too is an article

on which much is gained, and a great quantity is imported.

The Galla, and all the various tribes to the westward of Gondar, wear bracelets of this copper; and they say at times, that, near the country of Gongas and Guba, it has been sold, weight for weight, with gold. There is a shell likewise here, an univalve of the species of volutes, which sells at a cuba, or ten paras.

As there is no water in Masuah, the number of animals belonging to it can be but small. The sea-fowl have nothing singular in them, and are the grey and the white gull, and the small bird called the sea-lark or peckerel. The sky-lark is seen here, but is mute the whole year, till the first rain falls in November; he then mounts very high, and sings in the very heat of the day.

Arkeeko, a large town on the bottom of the bay of Masuah, has water, but labours under the same scarcity of provisions; for the tract of flat land behind both, called Samhar, is a perfect desert, and only inhabited from the month of November to April, by a variety of wandering tribes called Tora, Hazorta, Shiho, and Doba; and these carry all their cattle to the Abyssinian side of the mountains when the rains fall there, which are the opposite six months. When the season is thus reversed, they and their cattle are no longer in Samhar, or the dominion of the Naybe, but in the hands of the Abyssinians, who thereby, without being at the expense and trouble of marching against Masuah with an army, can make a line round it, and starve all at Arkeeko and Masuah, by prohibiting any sort of provisions to be carried thither from their side.

Masuah is very unwholesome, as, indeed, is the whole coast of the Red Sea from Suez to Babelmandel, but more especially between the tropics. Violent fevers, called there *nedad*, make the principal figure in this fatal list, and generally terminate the third day

---

The air of Masuah very insalubrious.

---

day in death. If the patient survives till the fifth day he very often recovers by drinking water only, and throwing a quantity of cold water upon him, even in his bed, where he is permitted to lie without attempting to make him dry, or change his bed, till another deluge adds to the first.

There is no remedy so sovereign here as the bark ; but it must be given in very different times and manners from those pursued in Europe. Were a physician to take time to prepare his patient for the bark, by first giving him purgatives, he would be dead of the fever before his preparation was completed. Immediately when a nausea or aversion to eat, frequent fits of yawning, straitness about the eyes, and an unusual, but not painful sensation along the spine, comes on, no time is then to be lost ; small doses of the bark must be frequently repeated, and perfect abstinence observed, unless from copious draughts of cold water. The second or third dose of the bark, if any quantity is swallowed, never fails to purge : and if this evacuation is copious, the patient rarely dies ; but, on the contrary, his recovery is generally rapid. Moderate purging, then, is for the most part to be adopted ; and rice is a much better food than fruit.

Ipecacuanha both fatigues the patient and heightens the fever, and so conducts the patient more speedily to his end. Black spots are frequently found on the breast and belly of the dead person. The belly swells, and the stench becomes insufferable in three hours after death, if the person dies in the day, or if the weather is warm.

The next common disease in the low country of Arabia, th intermediate island of Masuah, and all Abyssinia, (for the diseases are exactly similar in all this tract,) is the tertian fever, which is nothing different from our tertian, and is successfully treated in the same manner as in Europe. As no species of this disease, as far as Mr. Bruce observed, menaces the patient with death, especially in the beginning of  
the

---

---

Account of Diseases frequent in Abyssinia.

---

---

the disorder, some time may be allowed for preparation to those who doubt the effect of the bark in the country; but still he apprehends that the safest way is to give small doses from the beginning, on the first intermission, or even remission, though this should be somewhat obscure and uncertain.

The next disease, which we may say is endemial in the countries before-mentioned, is called *hanzeer*, the *hogs* or the *swine*, and is a swelling of the glands of the throat, and under the arms. This the ignorant inhabitants endeavour to bring to a suppuration, but in vain; they then open them in several places; a sore and running follows, and a disease very much resembling what is called in Europe the evil.

The next, though not a dangerous complaint, has a very terrible appearance. Small tubercles or swellings appear all over the body, but thickest in the thighs, arms, and lungs. These swellings go and come for weeks together without pain; though the legs often swell to a monstrous size as in the dropsy. Sometimes the patients have ulcers in their noses and mouths, not unlike those which are one of the malignant consequences of the venereal disease. The small swellings or eruptions, when squeezed, very often yield blood; in other respects the patient is generally in good health, saving the pains the ulcers give him; and the still greater uneasiness of mind which he suffers from the spoiling of the smoothness of his skin; for all the nations in Africa within the tropics are wonderfully affected at the smallest eruption or roughness of the skin. A black of Sennaar will hide himself in the house where it is dark, and is not to be seen by his friends, if he should have two or three pimples on any part of his body. Nor is there any remedy, however violent, that they will not fly to for immediate relief. Scars and wounds are no blemishes; and Mr. Bruce has seen them, for three or four pimples on their bracelet arm, suffer the application of a red-hot iron with great resolution and constancy.

---

---

Description of a disorder called Farenteit.

---

---

The next complaint common in these countries is called *Farenteit*, a corruption of an Arabic word, which signifies the worm of Pharaoh, all bad things being by the Arabs attributed to these poor kings, who seem to be looked upon by posterity as the evil genii of the country which they once governed. This extraordinary animal only afflicts those who are in constant habit of drinking stagnant water, whether that water is drawn out from wells, as in the kingdom of Sennaar, or found by digging in the sand where it is making its way to its proper level, the sea, after falling down the side of the mountains, after the tropical rains. This plague appears indiscriminately in every part of the body, though oftenest in the legs and arms; but far from affecting the fleshy parts of the body, it generally comes out where the bone has least flesh upon it. On looking at this worm, at its first appearance, a small black head is visible, with a hooked beak of a whitish colour. Its body is seemingly of a white silky texture, very like a small tendon bared and perfectly cleaned. After its appearance the natives of these countries, who are used to it, seize it gently by the head, and wrap it round a thin piece of silk or small bird's feather. Every day, or several times a day, they try to wind it up upon the quill as far as it comes readily; and, upon the smallest resistance, they give over for fear of breaking it. Mr. Bruce has seen five feet, or something more of this extraordinary animal, winded out with invincible patience in the course of three weeks. No inflammation then remained, and scarcely any redness round the edges of the aperture; only a small quantity of lymph appeared in the hole or puncture, which scarcely issued out upon pressing. In three days it was commonly well, and left no scar or dimple implying loss of substance.

Our traveller himself experienced this complaint. He was reading upon a sofa at Cairo, a few days after his return from Upper Egypt, when he felt in the  
fore



---

Mr. Bruce afflicted with the Farenteit.

---

fore part of his leg, upon the bone, about seven inches below the centre of the knee-pan, an itching resembling what follows the bite of a muscheto. Upon scratching, a small tumour appeared very like a muscheto bite. The itching returned about an hour afterwards; and, being more intent upon reading than his leg, he scratched it till the blood came. He soon after observed something like a black spot, which had already risen considerably above the surface of the skin. All medicine proved useless; and the disease not being known at Cairo, there was nothing for it but to have recourse to the only received manner of treating it in this country. About three inches of the worm was winded out upon a piece of raw silk in the first week, without pain or fever: but it was broken afterwards through the carelessness and rashness of the surgeon when changing a poultice on board the ship in which he returned to France: a violent inflammation followed; the leg swelled so as to scarce leave any appearance of knee or ancle; the skin, red and distended, seemed glazed like a mirror. The wound was now healed, and discharged nothing; and there was every appearance of mortification coming on. The great care and attention paid to him in the lazaretto, at Marseilles, and the skill of the surgeon, at length overcame this troublesome complaint. Fifty-two days had elapsed since it first began; thirty-five of which were spent in the greatest agony. It suppurated at last; and by enlarging the orifice, a good quantity of matter was discharged. Mr. Bruce had made constant use of bark, both in fomentations and inwardly; but did not recover the strength of his leg entirely, till near a year after, by using the baths of Poretta.

The last mention of the endemial diseases, mentioned by our author, and the most terrible of all others that can fall to the lot of man, is the *Elephantiasis*, which some have chosen to call the *Leprosy*, or *Lepra Arabum*; though in its appearance, and in all its cir-

---

 Account of an endemial disorder named Elephantiasis.
 

---

cumstances and stages, it no more resembles the leprosy of Palestine, than it does the gout or dropsy. Mr. Bruce never saw the beginning of this disease. During the course of it, the face is often healthy to appearance; the eyes vivid and sparkling: those affected have sometimes a kind of dryness upon the skin of their backs, which, upon scratching, leaves a meanness, or whiteness; the only circumstance, to the best of his recollection, in which it resembled the leprosy; but it has no scaliness. The hair, too, is of its natural colour: not white, yellowish, or thin, as in the leprosy; but so far from it that, though the Abyssinians have very rarely hair upon their chin, people, apparently in the last stage of the elephantiasis, may be seen with a very good beard of its natural colour.

The appetite is generally good during this disease; nor does any change of regimen affect the complaint. The pulse is only subject to the same variations as in those who have no declared nor predominant illness; they have a constant thirst, as the lymph, which continually oozes from their wounds, probably demands to be replaced. It is averred by the Abyssinians that it is not infectious. Our traveller had seen the wives of those who were in a very inveterate stage of this illness, who had borne them several children, who were yet perfectly free and sound from any contagion; nay, he never observed children visibly infected with this disease at all; though none of them had the appearance of health. It is said that the elephantiasis, though surely born with the infant, does not become visible till the approach to manhood, and that it sometimes passes by a whole generation.

The chief seat of this disease is from the bending of the knee downwards to the ankle; the leg is swelled to a great degree, becoming one size from bottom to top, and gathered into circular wrinkles, like small hoops or plaits; between every one of which there is an opening that separates it all round from the one above, and which is all raw flesh, or perfectly exco-riated.

---

---

Mr. Bruce's advice to travellers.

---

---

riated. From these circular divisions a great quantity of lymph constantly oozes. The swelling of the leg reaches over the foot, so as to leave about an inch or little more of it seen. It should seem that the black colour of the skin, the thickness of the leg, and its shapeless form, and the rough tubercles, or excrescences, very like those seen upon the elephant, give the name to this disease, and form a striking resemblance between the distempered legs of this unfortunate individual of the human species, and those of the noble quadruped, the elephant, when in full vigour.

Mr. Bruce's first general advice to a traveller, is, to remember well what was the state of his constitution before he visited these countries, and what his complaints were, if he had any; for fear very frequently seizes us upon the first sight of the many and sudden deaths we see upon our first arrival; and our spirits are so lowered by perpetual perspiration, and our nerves so relaxed, that we are apt to mistake the ordinary symptoms of a disease, familiar to us in our own country, for the approach of one of those terrible distempers that are to hurry us in a few hours into eternity. This has a bad effect in the very slightest disorders; so that it hath become proverbial—If you think you shall die, you shall die.

If a traveller finds that he is as well after having been some time in this country as he was before entering it, his best way is to make no innovation in his regimen, further than abating something in the quantity. But if he is of a tender constitution, he cannot act more wisely than to follow implicitly the regimen of sober healthy people of the country, without arguing upon European notions, or substituting what we consider as succedaneums to what we see used on the spot. All spirits are to be avoided; even bark is better in water than in wine. The stomach, being relaxed by profuse perspiration, needs something to strengthen, not to inflame, and enable it to perform diges-

---

Proper regimen to be observed by strangers

---

digestion. For this reason (instinct we should call it, if speaking of beasts) the natives of all eastern countries season every species of food, even the simplest and mildest rice, so much with spices, especially with pepper, as absolutely to blister a European palate. These powerful antiseptics Providence has planted in these countries for this use; and the natives have, from the earliest times, had recourse to them in proportion to the quantity they can procure. And hence, in these dangerous climates, the natives are as healthy as we are in our northern ones.

Our author lays it down, then, as a positive rule of health, that the warmest dishes the natives delight in are the most wholesome strangers can use in the putrid climates of the Lower Arabia, Abyssinia, Senaar, and Egypt itself; and that spirits, and all fermented liquors, should be regarded as poisons; and, for fear of temptation, not so much as be carried along with you, unless as a menstruum for outward applications. Spring, or running water, if you can find it, is to be your only drink. You cannot be too nice in procuring this article. But as, on both coasts of the Red Sea you scarcely find any but stagnant water, the way which our traveller practised, when at any place that allowed time and opportunity, was always this. He took a quantity of fine sand, washed it from the salt quality with which it was impregnated, and spread it upon a sheet to dry; he then filled an oil-jar with water, and poured into it as much from a boiling kettle as would serve to kill all the animalcula and eggs that were in it. He then sifted the dried sand, as slowly as possible, upon the surface of the water in the jar, till the sand stood half a foot at the bottom of it; after letting it settle at night, he drew it off by a hole in the jar with a spigot in it, about an inch above the sand; then threw the remaining sand out upon the cloth, and dried and washed it again. This process is sooner performed than described. The water is as limpid as the purest spring, and little inferior

---

---

when travelling through the deserts of Africa.

---

---

rior to the finest Spa. Drink largely of this without fear, according as your appetite requires. By violent perspiration the aqueous part of your blood is thrown off; and it is not spirituous liquor can restore this, whatever momentary strength it may give you from another cause. When hot and almost fainting with weakness from continual perspiration, Mr. Bruce has gone into a warm bath, and been immediately restored to strength, as upon first rising in the morning.

In Nubia, never scruple to throw yourself into the coldest river or spring you can find, in whatever degree of heat you are. The reason of the difference in Europe is, that when, by violence, you have raised yourself to an extraordinary degree of heat, the cold water in which you plunge yourself checks your perspiration, and shuts your pores suddenly, the medium is itself too cold, and you do not use force sufficient to bring back the perspiration, which nought but action occasioned: whereas, in these warm countries, your perspiration is natural and constant, though no action be used, only from the temperature of the medium; therefore though your pores are shut, the moment you plunge yourself into the cold water, the simple condition of the outward air again covers you with pearls of sweat the moment you emerge; and you begin the expense of the aqueous part of your blood afresh from the new stock that you have laid in by your immersion. For this reason if you are well, deluge yourself from head to foot, even in the house, where water is plentiful, by directing a servant to throw buckets upon you at least once a day when you are hottest; not from any imagination that the water braces you, as it is called, for your bracings will last you only a very few minutes: inundations will carry watery particles into your blood, though not equal to bathing in running streams, where the total immersion, the motion of the water, and the action of the limbs, all conspire to the benefit you are in quest of.

---

Singular custom among the orientals.

---

Do not fatigue yourself if possible. Exercise is not either so necessary or so salutary here as in Europe. Use fruits sparingly, especially if too ripe. The musa, or banana, in Arabia Felix, are rotten-ripe when they are brought to you. Avoid all sorts of fruit exposed for sale in the markets, as it has probably been gathered in the sun, and carried miles into it, and all its juices are in a state of fermentation. Lay it first upon a table covered with a coarse cloth, and throw frequently a quantity of water upon it; and, if you have an opportunity, gather it in the dew of the morning before dawn of day, for then it is far better.

Rice and pillaw are the best food; fowls are very bad, eggs are worse; greens are not wholesome. In Arabia the mutton is good, and, when roasted, may be eaten warm with safety; perhaps better, if cold. All soups or broths are to be avoided; all game is bad.

Mr. Bruce observes that he had known many very scrupulous about eating suppers, but, as he was persuaded, without reason. The great perspiration which relaxes the stomach so much through the day has now ceased, and the breathing of cooler air has given to its operations a much stronger tone. He always made it his most plentiful meal, if he ate meat at all. While at Jidda, his supper was a piece of cold roasted mutton, and a large glass of water, during the dog-days.

It is a custom that, from the first ages, has prevailed among the orientals, to shriek and lament upon the death of a friend or relation, and cut their faces upon the temples with their nails, about the breadth of a six-pence, one of which is left long for that purpose. It was always practised by the Jews, and thence adopted by the Abyssinians, though expressly forbidden both by the law and by the prophets. At Masuah, it seems to be particular to dance upon that occasion. The women, friends, and visitors, place themselves in a ring; then dance slowly, figuring in and out as in a country-dance. This dance

is all to the voice, no instrument being used upon the occasion; only the drum (or the butter-jar) is beaten adroitly enough, and seems at once necessary to keep the dance and song in order. In Abyssinia, too, this is pursued in a manner more ridiculous. Upon the death of an ozoro, or any nobleman, the twelve judges, who are generally between 60 and 70 years of age, sing the song, and dance the figure-dance, in a manner so truly ridiculous, that grief must have taken fast hold of every spectator who does not laugh upon the occasion.

On the 10th of November Mr. Bruce left Masuah, with the soldiers and boats belonging to Achmet. He was also attended by three servants from Abyssinia.

Between Masuah and Arkeeko, in the bay, are two islands, Toulahout and Shekh Seide; the first on the west, the other on the south. They are both uninhabited, and without water. Shekh Seide has a marabout, or saints' tomb, on the west end. It is not half a mile in length, when not over-flowed, but has two large points of sand which run far out to the east and to the west. Its west point runs so near to Toulahout, as, at low water, scarcely to leave a channel for the breadth of a boat to pass between.

At four o'clock in the afternoon of the 13th, Mr. Bruce waited upon the Naybe at his own house, who received him with more civility than usual. As he was busy, our traveller took his leave of him, only asking his commands for Habbesh, to which he answered, "We have time enough to think of that; do you come here to-morrow." Accordingly Mr. Bruce repeated his visit the next day, having first struck his tent and got all his baggage in readiness. The Naybe having received him as before, told him with a grave air, "That he was willing to further his journey into Habbesh to the utmost of his power, provided he shewed him that consideration which was due to him

7. U from

from all passengers; that, as by his tent, baggage, and arms, he saw he was a man above the common sort, which the Grand Signior's firman, and all his letters testified, less than 1000 patakas offered by him would be putting a great affront upon him; however, in consideration of the Governor of Tigre, to whom he was going, he would consent to receive 300, upon his swearing not to divulge this, for fear of the shame that would fall upon him from abroad."

To this Mr. Bruce answered in the same grave tone, that he thought him very wrong to take 300 patakas with shame, when receiving a 1000 would be more honourable as well as more profitable; therefore he had nothing to do but put that into his account-book with the Governor of Tigré, and settle his honor and his interest together. As for himself, he was sent for by Metical Aga, on account of the king, and was proceeding accordingly; and if he opposed his going forward to Metical Aga, he should return; but then again he should expect ten thousand patakas from Metical Aga for the trouble and loss of time he had been at, which he and the Ras would no doubt settle with him. The Naybe said nothing in reply, but only muttered, closing his teeth, *sheitan afrit*, that devil or tormenting spirit.

Those friends that Mr. Bruce had made at Masuah, seeing the Naybe's obstinacy against his departure, and knowing the cruelty of his nature, advised our traveller to abandon all thoughts of Abyssinia; as in passing through Sambar, among the many barbarous people whom he commanded, difficulties would multiply upon him daily, and either by accident, or order of the Naybe, he and his attendants would be surely cut off. Mr. Bruce, however, was too well convinced of the embarrassment that lay behind him if left alone with the Naybe, and too determined upon his journey, to hesitate upon going forward. He even flattered himself that his stock of stratagems, to prevent their

going,



---

---

to part with Mr. Bruce.

---

---

going, was by this time exhausted; and that the morrow would see them in the open fields, free from further tyranny and controul.

On the 15th, early in the morning, Mr. Bruce again struck his tent, and had his baggage prepared, to shew that he was determined to stay no longer. At eight o'clock he went to the Naybe, and found him almost alone, when he received him in a manner that, for him, might have passed for civil. He began, with a considerable degree of eloquence, or fluency of speech, a long enumeration of the difficulties of their journey, the rivers, precipices, mountains, and woods, they were to pass, the number of wild beasts every where to be found; as also the wild savage people that inhabited those places; the most of which, he said, were luckily under his command, and he would recommend to them to do them all manner of good offices. He commanded two of his secretaries to write the proper letters, and then ordered them coffee.

In the mean'time came in a servant covered with dust, and seemingly fatigued, as having arrived in haste from afar. The Naybe, with a considerable shew of uneasiness and confusion, opened the letters, which were said to bring intelligence, that the Hazorta, Shiho, and Tora, the three nations who possessed that part of Samhar through which our travellers' road led to Dobawa, the common passage from Masuah to Tigré, had revolted, driven away his servants, and declared themselves independent. He then, as if all was over, ordered his secretaries to stop writing; and, lifting up his eyes, began, with great seeming devotion, to thank God Mr. Bruce were not already on his journey; for, innocent as he was, when our travellers should have been cut off, the fault would have been imputed to him. Angry as Mr. Bruce was at so barefaced a farce, he could not help bursting out into a violent fit of loud laughter; when the Naybe put on the severest countenance, and desired to know the reason of his laughing at such a time. "It is

---

Mr. Bruce's determination to leave Masuah.

---

now two months, (answered Mr. Bruce,) since you have been throwing various objections in my way. Can you wonder that I do not give into so gross an imposition? This same morning before I struck my tent, in presence of your nephew Achmet, I spoke with two Shiho just arrived from Samhar, who brought letters to Achmet, which said all was in peace. Have you later intelligence than that of this morning?

He was for some time without speaking; then said, "If you are weary of living, you are welcome to go; but I will do my duty in warning those that are along with you of their and your danger, that, when the mischief happens, it may not be imputed to me." "No number of naked Shiho, (said Mr. Bruce,) unless instructed by you, can ever be found on our road, that will venture to attack us. The Shiho have no fire-arms; but if you have sent on purpose some of your soldiers that have fire-arms, these will discover by what authority they come. For our part, we cannot fly; we neither know the country, the language, nor the watering-places, and we shall not attempt it. We have plenty of different sorts of fire-arms, and your servants have often seen at Masuah that we are not ignorant of the use of them. We, it is true, may lose our lives; that is in the hand of the Almighty; but we shall not fail to leave enough on the spot, to give sufficient indication to the king and Ras Michael, who it was that were our assassins."

Mr. Bruce then rose very abruptly to go away. It is impossible to give any one, not conversant with these people, any conception what perfect masters the most clownish and beastly among them are of dissimulation. The countenance of the Naybe now changed in a moment. In his turn he burst out into a loud fit of laughter, which surprised our traveller full as much as his, some time before, had surprised the Naybe. Every feature of his teacherous countenance was altered and softened into complacency;

---

Great height of the mountains of Abyssinia.

---

and he, for the first time, bore the appearance of a man. He then confessed, that the whole was only a pretence to detain Mr. Bruce, that he might if possible cure his nephew Achmet, and his uncle Emir Mahomet. "But since you are resolved to go, be not afraid. The roads are safe enough. I will give you a person to conduct you, who will carry you in safety, even if there was danger; only go and prepare such remedies as may be proper for the Emir, and leave them with my nephew Achmet, while I finish my letters." This our traveller willingly consented to do, and on his return he found every thing ready.

The party left Arkeeko on the 15th, taking their road southward, along the plain, which is not here above a mile broad, and covered with short grass, nothing different from ours, only that the blade is broader. After an hour's journey, Mr. Bruce pitched his tent at Laberhey, near a pit of rain-water. The mountains of Abyssinia have a singular aspect from this place, as they appear in three ridges. The first is of no considerable height, but full of gullies and broken ground, thinly covered with shrubs; the second, higher and steeper, still more rugged and bare; the third is a row of sharp, uneven-edged mountains, which would be counted high in any country in Europe. Far above the top of all, towers that stupendous mass, the mountain of Taranta, probably one of the highest in the world, the point of which is buried in the clouds, and very rarely seen but in the clearest weather; at other times, abandoned to perpetual mist and darkness, the seat of lightning, thunder, and of storm.

In the evening, a messenger from the Naybe found them at their tent at Laberhey, and carried away their guide Saloome. It was not till the next day that he appeared again, and with him Achmet, the Naybe's nephew, who made Mr. Bruce deliver to him the thirteen pieces of Surab cloth which had been promised to Saloome for his trouble, and changed four  
of

---

 Laberhey.
 

---

of the men whom the Naybe had furnished for hire to carry the baggage, putting four others in their place. He then went into the tent, called for coffee, and while drinking it, said, "You are sufficiently persuaded that I am your friend; if you are not, it is too late now to convince you. It is necessary, however, to explain the reasons of what you see. You are not to go to Dobarwa, though it is the best road, the safest being preferable to the easiest. You will be apt to curse me when you are toiling and sweating in ascending Taranta, the highest mountain in Abyssinia, and on this account worthy of your notice. You are then to consider, if the fatigue of body you then suffer in that passage is not overpaid by the absolute safety you will find yourselves in. Dobarwa belongs to the Naybe, and I cannot answer for the orders he may have given. I have written to my officers there; they will behave the better to you for this; and, as you are strong and robust, the best I can do for you is to send you by a rugged road, and a safe one."

Achmet again gave his orders to Saloome, and, they all rising, said the *fedtah*, or *prayer of peace*; which being over, Achmet's servant gave him a narrow web of muslin, which, with his own hands, he wrapped round Mr. Bruce's head in the manner the better sort of Mahometans wear it at Dixan. He then parted, saying, "He that is your enemy is mine also: you shall hear of me by Mahomet Gibberti."

This finished a series of trouble and vexation, not to say danger, superior to any thing Mr. Bruce ever before had experienced, and of which the bare recital will give but an imperfect idea. These wretches possess talents for tormenting and alarming, far beyond the power of belief; and, by laying a true sketch of them before a traveller, an author does him the most real service.

On the 16th, in the evening, they left Laberhey; and, after continuing about an hour along the plain, the grass ended, the ground becoming dry, firm, and gravelly,

gravelly, and they then entered into a wood of acacia trees of considerable size.

On the 17th, the travellers pursued their course along the same plain; the bed of a torrent was their only road, which kept winding among mountains of no great height, but bare, stony, and full of terrible precipices; though its banks were covered with rack-trees, capers, and tamarinds. Great numbers of Shiho were this day met descending with their families and flocks from the tops of the high mountains of Habbesh to the plains near the sea. This change of residence gives them a propensity to violence and thieving; and it is a common saying in Abyssinia: "Beware of men that drink two waters"—in which imputation these and all the other pastoral tribes are included. The Shiho were once very numerous, but have been thinned by the ravages of the small-pox. They are the blackest of the tribes bordering on the Red Sea, and all wear clothing; the women having coarse cotton shifts reaching down to their ancles, girt about the middle with a leather belt; and the men short cotton breeches coming no lower than the middle of the thighs, and a goat's skin across their shoulders. Each of them had a lance in his hand, and a knife in his girdle which kept up the breeches. They have neither tents nor cottages, but live either in caves in the mountains, under trees, or in small conical huts built with a thick grass, resembling reeds.

At five in the evening the tent was pitched at Hamham on the side of a small green hill some hundred yards from the bed of the torrent, which, though before dry, was suddenly completely filled by a thunder-storm on the mountains. Hamham is a mountain of black stones, almost calcined by the violent heat of the sun. It belongs to the tribe of Hazorta, who, though neighbours of the Shiho, are of a copper colour, and live in constant defiance of the Naybe. All their substance is in cattle, but they kill none of them, living entirely upon milk; they dwell either in  
caves

## Tubbo.

caves or cabins just large enough to hold two persons, and covered with ox-hides. Some of the better sort of women have copper bracelets upon their arms, beads in their hair, and a tanned hide wrapt about their shoulders.

On the 18th, at half-past five in the morning, the party left their station at Hamhammon. For some time their road lay through a plain so thick set with acacia trees, that their hands and faces were all torn and bloody with the strokes of their thorny branches. At half past seven, they came to the mouth of a narrow valley, through which a stream of water ran very swiftly over a bed of pebbles. It was the first clear water they had seen since they left Syria, and gave them unspeakable pleasure. It was in taste excellent. The shade of the tamarind-tree, and the coolness of the air, invited them to rest on this delightful spot, though otherwise, perhaps, it was not exactly conformable to the rules of prudence, as they saw several huts and families of the Hazorta along the side of the stream, with their flocks feeding on the branches of trees and bushes, entirely neglectful of the grass they were treading under foot. The caper tree here grows as high as the tallest English elm; its flower is white, and its fruit, though not ripe, was fully as large as an apricot.

On the 19th, they continued their journey, their road still winding between mountains in the bed, or torrent of a river, bordered on each side with rack and sycamore trees of a good size. At half past eight o'clock, they encamped at a place called Tubbo, where the mountains are very steep, and broken very abruptly into cliffs and precipices. Tubbo was by much the most agreeable station they had seen; the trees were thick, full of leaves, and gave them abundance of very dark shade. There was a number of many different kinds so closely planted, that they seemed to be intended for natural arbours. Every tree was full of birds, variegated with an infinity of colours

---

The travellers arrive at the mountain of Taranta.

---

colours, but destitute of song; others, of a more homely and more European appearance, diverted them with a variety of wild notes, in a style of music still distinct and peculiar to Africa, as different in the composition from our linnet and goldfinch, as our English language is to that Abyssinia. Yet, from very attentive and frequent observation, Mr. Bruce found that the sky-lark at Masuah sung the same notes as in England. It was observable, that the greatest part of the beautiful painted birds were of the jay, or magpie kind. Nature seemed, by the fineness of their dress, to have marked them for children of noise and impertinence, but never to have intended them for pleasure or meditation.

On the 20th, they began to ascend the hills, or eminences, which serve as the roots or skirts of the great mountain Taranta. The road was on each side bordered with nabca, or jujeb trees of great beauty, and sycamores perfectly deprived of their verdure and branches. The country here is every where deprived of the shade it would enjoy from these fine trees, by the barbarous axes of the Hazorta. They found every where immense flocks of antelopes; as also partridges of a small kind, that willingly took refuge upon trees: neither of these seemed to consider our travellers as enemies. The antelopes let them pass through their flocks, only removing to the right or to the left, or standing still and gazing upon them till they passed. But, as they were then on the confines of Tigré, or rather on the territory of the Baharnagash, and as the Hazorta were in motion every where removing towards the coast, far from the dominions of the Abyssinians, to which they were going, a friend of their own tribe, who had joined our travellers for safety, knowing how little trust was to be put in his countrymen when moving in this contrary direction, advised them by no means to fire, or give any unnecessary indication of the spot where they were, till they gained the mountain of Taranta, at the foot of which they halted.

---

They ascend the mountain with extreme difficulty,

---

In the afternoon, they began to ascend the mountain, through a most rocky, uneven road, if it can deserve the name, not only from its incredible steepness, but from the large holes and gullies made by the torrents, and the huge fragments of rocks, which, loosened by the water, had been tumbled down into their way. It was with great difficulty they could creep up, each man carrying his knapsack and arms; but it seemed beyond the possibility of human strength to carry their baggage and instruments. Their tent, indeed, suffered nothing by its falls; but the telescopes, time-keeper, and quadrant, were to be treated in a more deliberate and tender manner. The quadrant had hitherto been carried by eight men, four to relieve each other; but these were ready to give up the undertaking upon trial of the first few hundred yards. A number of expedients, such as trailing it on the ground, (all equally fatal to the instrument) were proposed. At last, as Mr. Bruce was incomparably the strongest of the company, as well as the most interested, he, and a stranger Moor, who had followed them, carried the head of it for about 400 yards over the most difficult and steepest part of the mountain, which before had been considered as impracticable by all. Yasine was the name of this Moor, recommended to Mr. Bruce by Metical Aga, a person whom he had discovered to be of a most sagacious turn of mind, firm heart, and strenuous nerves; never more distinguished for all these qualities than in the hour of imminent danger; at other times remarkable for quietness and silence, and a constant study of his Koran.

The instruments and baggage were, with infinite toil, carried near half way up the terrible mountain of Taranta. The next task, which was to bring up the five asses belonging to the company, proved, if any thing, still more troublesome. Their loads having been taken off the animals were left to be driven up by one of the attendants; but these perverse creatures not only ran back down the hill, but continued at



---

and enter a village, named Halai, seated at its top.

---

at a brisk trot to return by the way they had come. Four Moors, with one firelock, followed them. They overtook the fugitives; but, on their way back, the hyænas, attracted from their retreats among the bushes, followed them step by step, and their numbers kept continually increasing; so that the men, armed only with lances, began to be as much afraid for themselves as for the asses. At length the ravenous beasts became so bold, that one of them seized and pulled down an ass, and a general engagement with the hyænas was about to ensue, when the man who carried the firelock discharged it among them, and caused them all to run off, to the great satisfaction of the asses and their drivers.

It was found impossible to pitch the tents, from extreme weariness, occasioned by the exertions they had made. But there was another reason also; for there was not earth enough on the bare sides of Taranta to hold fast a tent-pin: there were, however numerous caves near them, and throughout the mountain, which had served for houses to the old inhabitants; and in these they found a quiet, and not inconvenient, place of repose the night of the 20th of November.

On the 21st, at half past six in the morning, Mr. Bruce, having encouraged his company with good words, increase of wages, and hopes of reward, they began to encounter the other half of the mountain. His baggage now moved much more briskly than the preceding day. The upper part of the mountain was indeed steeper, more craggy, rugged, and slippery than the lower, and impeded more with trees, but not embarrassed so much with large stones and holes. Their knees and hands, however, were cut to pieces by frequent falls, and their faces torn by the multitude of thorny bushes. At last, they gained the top of the mountain, upon which is situated a small village called Halai, the first they had seen since they left Masuah. It is chiefly inhabited by poor servants and shepherds

---

Description of the country and people on the top of Taranta.

---

keeping the flocks of men of substance, living in the town of **Dixan**.

The plain on the top of the mountain **Taranta** was, in many places, sown with wheat, which was then ready to be cut down, though the harvest was not yet begun. The grain was clean, and of a good colour, but inferior in size to that of **Egypt**. It did not, however, grow thick; nor was the stalk above fourteen inches high. The water is very bad on the top of **Taranta**, being only what remains of the rain in the hollows of the rocks, and in pits prepared for it. Being very tired, our travellers pitched their tent on the top of the mountain. The night was remarkably cold, at least appeared so to them, whose pores were opened by the excessive heat of **Masuah**. The dew began to fall strongly, and continued so till an hour after sunset, though the sky was perfectly clear, and the smallest stars discernible.

The people inhabiting this mountain and its environs are not black, but of a yellowish dark complexion. Their hair is short and curled; but the curl is artificial. They wear sandals on their feet, a goat-skin on their shoulders, and a cotton cloth about their middle. Abundance of beautiful cattle feed on the mountain. The cows are, for the most part, completely white, with large dewlaps hanging to their knees, long silken hair, and wide horns like those of our **Lincolnshire** breed of black cattle. The sheep are large and uniformly black; with great heads, short ears, and hair, instead of wool.

Here **Mr. Bruce** killed a large eagle, about six feet ten inches from wing to wing. It seemed very tame till shot. The ball having wounded it but slightly; when on the ground it could not be prevented from attacking the men or beasts near it with great force and fierceness, so that **Mr. Bruce** was obliged to stab it with a bayonet. It was of a dirty white; only the head and upper part of its wings were of a light brown.

---

The travellers descend the mountain, and arrive at Dixan.

---

On the morning of the 22d, they left their station on the top of Taranta, and soon after began to descend on the side of Tigré, though a broken and uneven road. After this they began to mount a small hill, from which they had a distinct view of Dixan. They pitched their tent near some marshy ground for the sake of water, at three quarters past ten; but it was very bad, having been for several weeks stagnant. They saw here the people busy at their wheat harvest; others, who had finished theirs, were treading it out with cows or bullocks. They make no use of their straw; sometimes they burn it, and sometimes leave it on the spot to rot.

At half an hour after four in the afternoon, they came to Dixan. As Halai was the first village, so this is the first town in Abyssinia, on the side of Taranta. Dixan is built on the top of a hill, perfectly in form of a sugar loaf; a deep valley surrounds it every where like a trench, and the road winds spirally up the hill till it ends among the houses. This place was taken after an obstinate defence, by Michael Suhul, governor of Tigré during the reign of Yasous II. when it was mostly inhabited by Mahometans, and secretly supported by the Naybe of Masuah. The inhabitants were exterminated, and Michael then farmed it to the Naybe, by whom it was repeopled. It consists of a high and low town, divided from each other by a considerable space. The lower was inhabited by Christians as they called themselves, and the upper by the party of the Naybe. Saloome, Mr. Bruce's guide, was the son of the governor for the latter. Achmet was the person in whom the Moors in the low town had confided; and the Christian chief was a dependent on Janni, the Greek friend of Mr. Bruce at Adowa, and who had the direction of all the custom-houses in Tigré, and of that at Dixan among the rest.

Our travellers' baggage had passed the trench, and had reached the low town through which Saloome had

con-

conducted Mr. Bruce, under pretence of getting a speedy shelter from the heat: but he overacted his part; and Janni's servant, who spoke Greek, giving Mr. Bruce a hint to go no farther, he turned short towards the custom-house, and sat down with his fire-lock upon a stone at the door. The baggage quickly followed, and all was put safe in a kind of a court enclosed with a sufficient stone-wall.

It was not long before Hagi Abdelcader, Achmet's friend, came to them, inviting Mr. Bruce civilly to his house, and declaring to him the friendly orders he had received from Achmet concerning him; bringing along with him also a goat, some butter, and honey. Mr. Bruce excused himself from leaving Janni's friend, the Christian, where he had first alighted; but he recommended to him Yasine who had begun to shew great attachment to Mr. Bruce. In about a quarter of an hour came Saloome with about twenty men, and demanded our travellers, in the name of the Naybe, as his strangers: he said they owed him money for conducting them, and likewise for the customhouse dues. In a moment near a hundred men were assembled round Hagi Abdelcader, all with shields and lances, and Mr. Bruce expected to see a fray of the most serious kind. But Abdelcader, with a switch in his hand, went gravely up to Saloome; and, after chiding his party with great authority, held up his stick twice over Saloome's head, as if to strike him; then ordered him, if he had any demands, to come to him in the evening; upon which both parties dispersed, and left them in peace. The matter was settled in the evening with Saloome in an amicable manner.

The town of Dixan consists of Moors and Christians, and is very well peopled; yet the only trade of either of these sects is a very extraordinary one, that of selling children. The Christians bring such as they have stolen in Abyssinia to Dixan as to a sure deposit; and the Moors receive them there, and carry them

---

Infamous traffic carried on at Dixan.

---

them to a certain market at Masuah, whence they are sent over to Arabia or India. The priests of the province of Tigré, especially those near the rock Demo, are openly concerned in this infamous practice; and some of these have been licensed by Michael to carry it on as a fair trade, upon paying so many firelocks for each dozen or score of slaves. Nothing can elucidate the footing upon which this trade stands better than a transaction, which happened while Mr. Bruce was in Ethiopia, and which reached Gondar by way of complaint from Masuah, and was told him by Michael himself.

Two priests of Tigré had been long intimate friends. They dwelt near the rock Damo. The youngest was married, and had two children, both sons; the other was old, and had none. The old one reproved his friend one day for keeping his children at home idle, and not putting them to some profession by which they might gain their bread. The married priest pleaded his poverty, and his want of relations that could assist him; on which the old priest offered to place his eldest son with a rich friend of his own, who had no children, and where he should want for nothing. The proposal was accepted, and the young lad, about ten years of age, was delivered by his father to the old priest, to carry him to his friend, who sent the boy to Dixan, and sold him there. Upon the old priest's return, after giving the father a splendid account of his son's reception, treatment, and prospects, he gave him a piece of cotton cloth, as a present from his son's patron. The younger child, about eight years old, hearing the good fortune of his elder brother, became so importunate as to be allowed to go and visit him, that the parents were obliged to humour him, and consent. But the old priest had a scruple, saying, he would not take the charge of so young a boy, unless his mother went with him. This being settled, the old priest conveyed them to the market at Dixan, where he sold  
both

---

Infamous traffic carried on at Dixan.

---

both the mother and the remaining child. Returning to the father, the old priest told him, that his wife would stay only so long, and expected he would then fetch her upon a certain day, which was named. The day being come, the two priests went together to see this happy family; and, upon their entering Dixan, it was found, that the old priest had sold the young one, but not to the same Moor to whom he had sold his family. Soon after, these two Moors who had brought the Christians, becoming partners in the venture, the old priest was to receive forty cotton-cloths, that is, 10*l.* sterling, for the husband, wife, and children. The payment of the money, perhaps the resentment of the family trepanned, and the appearance of equity which the thing itself bore, suggested to the Moorish merchants that there was some more profit, and not more risk, if they carried off the old priest likewise. But as he had come to Dixan, as it were under public faith, in a trade that greatly interested the town, they were afraid to attempt any thing against him whilst there. They began then as it were to repent of their bargain, from a pretended apprehension that they might be stopped and questioned at going out of town, unless he would accompany them to some small distance; in consideration of which, they would give him, at parting, two pieces of cloth to be added to the other forty, which he was to take back to Tigré with him upon his return. The beginning of such expeditions is in the night. When all were asleep, they set out from Dixan, the buyers, the seller, and the family sold; and, being arrived near the mountain where the way turns off to the desert, the whole party fell upon the old priest, threw him down, and bound him. The woman insisted that she might be allowed to cut, or tear, off the little beard he had, in order, as she said, to make him look younger; and this demand was reckoned too just to be denied her. The whole five were then carried to Masuah; the woman and her two

## Geographical situation of Dixan.

two children were sold to Arabia; the two priests had not so ready a market, and they were both in the Naybe's house when Mr. Bruce was at Masuah, though he did not then know it. The Naybe, willing to ingratiate himself with Ras Michael at a small expense, wrote to him an account of the transaction; and offered, as they were priests, to restore them to him. But the Ras returned for answer that the Naybe should keep them to be his chaplains; as he hoped, some day, he would be converted to the Christian faith himself; if not, he might send them to Arabia with the rest; they would serve to be carriers of wood and drawers of water; and that there still remained at Damo enough of their kind to carry on the trade with Dixan and Masuah. This story Mr. Bruce heard from Ras Michael himself, at his grand-daughter's marriage, when he was feasting, and in great spirits. He, and all the company, laughed heartily; and although there were in the room at least two dozen of priests, none of them seemed to take this incident more seriously than the rest of the company. From this we may guess at the truth of what the Catholic writers advance, with regard to the respect and reverence shewn to the priesthood by the government and great men in Abyssinia. Dixan is in lat.  $14^{\circ} 57' 55''$  north, and long.  $40^{\circ} 7' 30''$  east of the meridian of Greenwich.

Our travellers left Dixan on the 25th of November, descending the very steep hill on which the town is situated. Hagi Abdelcader had attended them to some distance before he left them, and the noted Saloome came likewise to see if some occasion would offer of doing them further mischief; but the king's servants, now upon their own ground, began to take upon them a proper consequence. One of them went to meet Saloome at the bank of the river; and, making a mark on the ground with his knife, declared that his patience was quite exhausted by what he had been witness to at Masuah and Dixan; and if now Saloome, or any other man belonging to the Naybe, offered to pass the mark, he would bind him hand and

---

The travellers pass by the plain of Zarai.

---

foot, and carry him to a place where he should be left tied to a tree, a prey to the lion and hyæna. They all returned; and there the persecution of our traveller by the Naybe ended. But it was very evident, from Achmet's behaviour and discourse, had they gone by Dobarwa, which was the road proposed by the Naybe, that their sufferings would not have been as yet half finished, unless they had ended with their lives.

They remained under a fine spreading daroo tree, seven feet and a half in diameter, during the night of the 25th; a memorable station to Mr. Bruce, as the first where he recovered a portion of that tranquillity of mind to which he had been a stranger ever since his arrival at Masuah. Here the party was joined by several Moors, with about twenty loaded asses, and two loaded bulls. Mr. Bruce called the whole party together, recommended good order, and desired every one to leave him who would not agree to obey implicitly the orders he should give as to the hours and places of encamping, keeping watch at night and setting out in the morning. He appointed Yasine judge of all disputes between them; and if the difference should be between any of them and Yasine, then Mr. Bruce's determination was to be final. To these arrangements they all cheerfully consented; on which they repeated the fedtah, and swore to stand by each other to the last, against any enemy, be his religion what it might, by whom they should be attacked.

On the 26th, at seven in the morning, they left their most pleasant quarters under the tree, and set forward with great alacrity. About a quarter of a mile from the river they crossed the end of the plain Zarai. Though this is but three miles long, and one where broadest, it was the largest plain they had seen since their passing Taranta, whose top was now covered wholly with large, black, and very heavy clouds, from which they heard frequent peals of thunder, and



---

They arrive at the village of Hadawi.

---

saw violent streams of lightning. This plain was sown partly with wheat, partly with Indian corn; the first was cut down, the other not yet ripe. About half after eleven, they encamped under a mountain, on the top of which is a village called Hadawi, the seat of the Baharnagash. This officer had bought the little district which he commanded after Michael Subul, governor of Tigré, had annexed to his own province what he pleased of the old domains, and farmed the other part to the Naybe; and he was in fact a servant maintained to watch over the latter, and to starve him into obedience by intercepting his provisions, whenever he was commanded by the governor of Tigré. The Baharnagash visited our traveller in his tent, and was the first Abyssinian whom he had seen on horseback. He asked Mr. Bruce, whether he had ever seen horses before, and described their qualities in such a manner as could have given no distinct ideas of their character to a person unacquainted with their species. A goat and fifty cakes of teff bread were procured from him. For several different articles, in value about 12l. sterling, Mr. Bruce bought of him a black horse that pleased him. But when the horse was to be delivered, after the price had been paid, the Baharnagash offered in his stead an old brown one, blind of an eye. Mr. Bruce and his friends remonstrated; and after attempting in vain to put them off with some pitiful pretences and excuses, the seller produced the black horse for which our traveller had bargained. He called him Mirza, and found in him a companion who contributed always to his pleasure, and more than once to his safety, and was of considerable use in gaining him the notice of the Abyssinian monarch. The Baharnagash was in the end well pleased with his bargain. Mr. Bruce made him a present, and in the sequel did him some services with the king and Ras Michael. His character was strongly marked with simplicity and buffoonery; but he was a man of

---

 Hadawi—Barranda—Tomumbusso.
 

---

great personal bravery, and afterwards died fighting for his sovereign, in the battle of Serbraxos.

On the 27th our travellers left Hadawi, continuing their journey down a very steep and narrow path between two stony hills; then ascended one still higher, upon the top of which stands the large village of Gombubba, whence they had a prospect over a considerable plain all sown with the different grain this country produces, wheat, barley, teff, and tocosto; simsim (or sesame) and nook; the last is used for oil. At five o'clock in the afternoon there was a violent shower of hailstones. Nothing is more common than aggravation about the size of hail; but Mr. Bruce stooping to take up one, which he thought as large as a nutmeg, he received a blow from another just under his eye, which he imagined had blinded him, and occasioned a swelling all the next day. The tent was pitched near the village of Barranda, where they were overtaken by the Babarnagash, whose heart Mr. Bruce had so entirely won that he found it impossible to get away the next day, so that it was the 29th before he left that station.

The travellers now entered a close country covered with brush-wood, wild oats, and high bent-grass, in many places rocky and uneven so as scarcely to leave a narrow path to pass. Just at the very entrance a lion had killed a very fine animal called Agazan, of the goat species, but of the size of a large ass. It was scarcely dead, and the blood still running. Every individual, Moors, Christians, and Abyssinians, cut off a large piece of flesh; notwithstanding the aversion of the latter even to touch any thing that is dead, unless regularly killed by the knife. It is a notion common to them all that they may lawfully eat what is killed by the lion, but not by any other beast. At noon they crossed the river Balezat, the first river then actually running that they had seen since they passed Taranta. Proceeding along its banks through a narrow plain, they came to Tomumbusso, a high

## Kella—Damo.

pyramidal mountain of porphyry, on the top of which is a convent of monks, who do not, however, reside there but only come hither upon certain feasts, when they keep open house for all visitors.

Here our travellers encamped by the side of the river and were detained that and the following day, on account of certain duties demanded of all passengers. These duties, called *Avides* or gifts, though levied in a very rigorous manner, are established by usage in particular spots denominated *Ber* or passes. There is no tariff; and the farmer of the duties fixes, as he thinks proper, what each caravan has to pay. Some have on this account been detained for months, and others, in time of trouble, stripped of every thing as the neighboring villages rise in arms on the least resistance. As Mr. Bruce assumed a high tone, declaring that he was sent for by the king, and was going to Ras Michael, he was suffered to proceed on paying five pieces of blue cotton cloth, and one of white.

On the 1st of December our travellers arrived at a place named Kella, or the Castle, because the mountains run for a considerable extent nearly at equal distances on each side straight and even, in shape like a wall, with gap at certain distances resembling embrasures and bastions. This rock is also called Damo, and was anciently the prison of the collateral heirs male of the royal family. This being one of the passes mentioned above, Mr. Bruce was detained here three whole days by the extravagant demands of the farmers of the *awide*, who laughed at all the importance which he and his companions gave themselves. What increased the awkwardness of their situation was, that the people would not take money for provisions, but only merchandize by way of barter. A cloth was accordingly spread upon the ground for the purpose of opening shop, at the sight of which hundreds of young women poured down on every side from villages behind the mountains. Beads and anti-

mony

---

Beads in great estimation among the Abyssinians.

---

timony are here the standard articles of commerce, but these last, as our travellers found by experience, are a dangerous speculation. The person employed to buy them at Jidda had not unluckily received the last list of fashions from this country; for here, as in the most civilized capital of Europe, all depends upon fashion. He had purchased a quantity beautifully flowered with red and green, of the size of a large pea; also some large oval green, and yellow ones; whereas the ton among the beauties of Tigré required small sky-blue beads, about the size of small lead shot, blue and white bugles, and large yellow glass beads flat on the sides. All the beads of our traveller were therefore peremptorily rejected. At length one of the Moors produced a large package containing a stock of all the beads in fashion. This was imprudently opened, and immediately a general shout was set up by the female purchasers; twenty or thirty of whom fell upon the parcel, tearing and breaking all the strings. This joke did not seem to be relished by the sellers; in whom that regard which they would otherwise have shewn for the fair sex was quite extinguished by the hard-heartedness of their customers, who had before professed that they would let the strangers starve rather than give them a handful of flour for all their unfashionable commodities. A dozen whips and sticks were laid on their hands and arms, till each dropped their booty; and the men who came with them stood laughing without shewing the least disposition to interfere. The restitution, however, would not have been complete, had not Yasine, who knew the country well, fired one of the ship blunderbusses into the air behind their backs. At this unexpected report, both men and women fell flat on their faces; the latter were immediately dragged off the cloth, and not a hand had strength left to carry away a single bead. Mr. Bruce's people wrapped the whole in the cloth, and thus for a time the market was ended. It was, however, again  
opened,

---

---

The travellers leave Kella.

---

---

opened, but the sellers having acquired wisdom by experience, produced small quantities at once, which they disposed of not without a very sharp contest and clamour; but in return procured a plentiful supply of honey, butter, flour, and pumpkins scarcely inferior in flavor to melons.

Mr. Bruce, by the promise of a parcel of beads, prevailed on a young man of Kella to carry a letter, representing his situation to his friend Janni at Adowa; and this messenger used such diligence that on the morning of the fourth day he returned without ever having been missed at home. At the same time an officer came from Janni, with a peremptory mandate in the name of Ras Michael, declaring to the person who was the cause of Mr. Bruce's detention, that were it not for ancient friendship, the bearer should have carried him to Ras Michael in irons; commanding him to discharge our traveller from all *Awides*, and, as Shum of the place, to furnish him with provisions.

Yasine, during the four days Mr. Bruce had staid at a place called Kello, had told him his whole history. He had been settled in a province of Abyssinia, near to Sennaar, called Ras-el-feel; had married Abd el Jilleel, the Shekh's daughter; but, growing more popular than his father-in-law, he had been persecuted by him, and obliged to leave the country. He began now to form hopes, that, if Mr. Bruce was well received, as he saw, in all appearance, he was to be, he might, by his interest, be appointed to his father-in-law's place; especially if there was war, as every thing seemed to indicate. Abd el Jilleel was a coward, and incapable of making himself of personal value to any party. On the contrary, Yasine was a tried man, an excellent horseman, strong, active, and of known courage, having been twice with the late King Yasous, in his invasions of Sennaar, and both times much wounded there.

On the fourth in the afternoon, our travellers left  
Kella;

---

Adowa—Mareb—Yeeha.

---

Kella; and on the fifth of December, they began first to see the high mountain of Adowa, nothing resembling in shape to those of Europe, nor, indeed, any other country. Their sides were all perpendicular rocks, high, like steeples, or obelisks, and broken into a thousand different forms.

They next passed the Mareb, which is the boundary between Tigré and the Baharnagash, on this side. It runs over a bed of soil; is large, deep, and smooth; but, on rain falling, it is more dangerous to pass than any river in Abyssinia, on account of the frequent holes in its bottom. They then entered the narrow plain of Yeeha, wherein runs the small river, which either gives name to, or takes it from it.

At eleven o'clock, they rested by the side of the mountain whence the river falls. All the villages that had been built here bore the marks of the justice of the government of Tigré. They had been long the haunts of the most incorrigible banditti in the province. He surrounded them in one night, burnt their houses, extirpated the inhabitants, and would never suffer any one since to settle there.

On Wednesday the 6th of December, they again proceeded on their journey, and in about three hours, travelling on a very pleasant road, over easy hills and through hedge-rows of jessamine, honeysuckles, and many kinds of flowering shrubs, they arrived at Adowa, where once resided Michael Subul, Governor of Tigré.

Adowa is situated on the declivity of a hill, on the west side of a small plain surrounded every where by mountains. This plain is watered by three rivulets, which are never dry in the midst of summer. There are fish in these three streams, but none of them remarkable for their size, quantity, or goodness. The best are those of Mai Gogua, a clear and pleasant rivulet, running very violently and with great noise. There are many agreeable spots to the south-east of the convent, on the banks of  
this

this river, which are thickly shaded with wood and bushes.

Adowa consists of about 300 houses, and occupies a much larger space than would be thought necessary for these to stand on, by reason that each house has an inclosure round it of hedges and trees; the last chiefly the wanzeý. The number of these trees planted in all the towns, screen them in such a manner, that, at a distance, they appear so many woods. Adowa was not formerly the capital of Tigré, but accidentally became so upon the accession of this governor, whose property or paternal estate, lay in and about it. His mansion-house is not distinguished from any of the others in the town, unless by its size; it is situated upon the top of the hill, and resembles a prison rather than a palace; for there are, in and about it, above three hundred persons in irons, some of whom have been there for three and twenty years, mostly with a view to extort money from them; and, what is the most unhappy, even when they have paid the sum of money which he asks, they do not get their deliverance from his merciless hands: most of them are kept in cages like wild beasts, and treated every way in the same manner.

What deservedly interested our travellers most was, the appearance of their kind and hospitable landlord Janni. He had sent servants to conduct them from the passage of the river, and met them himself at the outer door of his house. Mr. Bruce says he does not remember to have seen a more respectable figure. He had his own short white hair, covered with a thin muslin turban, a thick well-shaped beard, as white as snow, down to his waist. He was clothed in the Abyssinian dress, all of white cotton; only he had a red silk sash, embroidered with gold, about his waist, and sandals on his feet: his upper garment reached down to his ancles. He had a number of servants and slaves of both sexes about him; and, when Mr. Bruce approached him, he seemed disposed to receive

---

Mr. Bruce's unexpected interview with Janni.

---

him with marks of humility and inferiority, which mortified our traveller much, considering the obligations he was under to him, the trouble he had given, and was unavoidably still to give, him. Mr. Bruce embraced him with great acknowledgments of kindness and gratitude, calling him father; a title he always used in speaking either to him or of him afterwards, when he was in higher fortune, which he constantly remembered with great pleasure.

He conducted the strangers through a court-yard planted with jessamine, to a very neat, and, at the same time, large room, furnished with a silk sofa: the floor was covered with Persian carpets and cushions. All round, flowers and green leaves were strewed upon the outer yard; and the windows and sides of the room stuck full of evergreens, in commemoration of the Christmas festival that was at hand. Mr. Bruce stopped at the entrance of this room; for his feet were both dirty and bloody; and it is not good breeding to shew or speak of your feet in Abyssinia, especially if any thing ails them; and, at all times, they are covered. Janni immediately perceived the wounds that were upon his feet. Both their clothes and flesh were torn to pieces at Taranta, and several other places; but he thought they had come on mules furnished them by the Naybe. For the young man Mr. Bruce had sent to him from Kella, following the genius of his countrymen, though telling truth was just as profitable to him as lying, had chosen the latter, and, seeing the horse he had got from the Baharnagash, had figured in his own imagination a multitude of others, and told Janni that there were with Mr. Bruce horses, asses, and mules, in great plenty; so that when Janni saw them passing the water, he took our traveller for a servant, and expected, for several minutes, to see the splendid company arrive, well mounted upon horses and mules caparisoned.

He was so shocked at Mr. Bruce's saying that he performed this terrible journey on foot, that he burst  
into



into tears, uttering a thousand reproaches against the Naybe for his hard-heartedness and ingratitude, as he had twice, he said, hindered Michael from going in person and sweeping the Naybe from the face of the earth. Water was immediately procured to wash their feet. And here began another contention: Janni insisted upon doing this himself, which made Mr. Bruce run out into the yard, and declared he would not suffer it. The like dispute took place among the servants. It was always a ceremony in Abyssinia to wash the feet of those that come from Cairo, and who are understood to have been pilgrims at Jerusalem.

This was no sooner finished, than a great dinner was brought, exceedingly well dressed. But no consideration or intreaty could prevail upon their kind landlord to sit down and partake with them. He would stand all the time, with a clean towel in his hand, though he had plenty of servants; and afterwards dined with some visitors, who had come, out of curiosity, to see a man arrived from so far. It was long before Mr. Bruce cured his kind landlord of these respectful observances, which troubled him very much; nor could Janni ever wholly relinquish them.

Adowa is the seat of a very valuable manufacture of coarse cotton cloth, which circulates all over Abyssinia, instead of silver money; each web is sixteen peck long, of one and three-fourths width, their value a pataka; that is ten for the ounce of gold. The houses in Adowa are all of rough stone, cemented with mud instead of mortar. That of lime is not used but at Gondar, where it is very bad. The roofs are in the form of cones, and thatched with a reedy sort of grass, something thicker than wheat straw. Excepting a few spots taken notice of as they came to Adowa, this was the only part of Tigré where there was soil sufficient to yield corn; the whole of the province besides was one entire rock.

At Adowa, and all the neighborhood, they have three harvests annually. The first seed-time is in July.

## Great height of the Abyssinian mountains.

and August; it is the principal one for wheat, which they then sow in the middle of the rains. In the same season they sow *tocuffo*, *teff*, and barley. From the 20th of November, they reap first their barley, then their wheat, and last of all their *teff*. In the room of these, they sow immediately upon the same ground, without any manure, barley, which they reap in February; and then often sow *teff*, but more frequently a kind of vetch, or pea, called *Shimbra*: these are cut down before the first rains, which are in April. With all these advantages of triple harvests, which cost no fallowing, weeding, manure, or other expensive processes, the farmer in Abyssinia is always poor and miserable.

The cattle roam at discretion through the mountains. The herdsmen set fire to the grass, bent, and brushwood, before the rains; and an amazing verdure immediately follows. As the mountains are very steep and broken, goats are chiefly the flocks that graze upon them. It is not the extreme height of the mountains in Abyssinia that occasions surprise, but the number of them, and the extraordinary forms they present to the eye. Some of them are flat, thin, and square, in shape of a hearth-stone, or slab, that scarce would seem to have base sufficient to resist the action of the winds. Some are like pyramids, others like obelisks or prisms, and some, the most extraordinary of all the rest, pyramids pitched upon their points, with their base uppermost, which, if it were possible, as it is not, they could have been so formed in the beginning, would be strong objections to our received ideas of gravity.

On the 10th of January 1770, Mr. Bruce visited the remains of the Jesuits' convent of Fremona. It is built upon the even ridge of a very high hill, in the middle of a large plain, on the opposite side of which stands Adowa. It rises from the east to the west, and ends in a precipice on the east; it is also very steep to the north, and slopes gently down to the plain on

south. The convent is about a mile in circumference, built substantially with stones, which are cemented with lime-mortar. It has towers in the flanks and angles; and, notwithstanding the ill usage it has suffered, the walls still remain entire to the height of twenty-five feet. It is divided into three, by cross walls of equal height. The first division seems to have been destined for the convent, the middle for the church, and the third division is separated from this by a wall, and stands upon a precipice.

The kindness, hospitality, and fatherly care, of Jani never ceased a moment. He had already represented Mr. Bruce in the most favorable light to the Iteghe, or queen-mother, (whose servant he had long been,) to her daughter Ozoro Esther, and Ozoro Altash; and, above all, to Michael, with whom his influence was very great; and, indeed, to every body he had any weight with, his own countrymen, Greeks, Abyssinians, and Mahometans; and, as they afterwards found, he had raised their curiosity to a great pitch.

Abyssinia, after witnessing the death of two kings by the command of Michael, who had been elevated to the dignity of Ras, or prime minister, by which he was in fact invested with the highest authority both civil and military was at this time in a state of civil war. Fasil, an officer of great influence among the tribe of Galla, to which the maternal relations of one of the murdered monarchs belonged, was in arms with a considerable force against the new king and the Ras. Just at the moment when Mr. Bruce arrived at Adowa, a kind of balm had, however, spread itself over the country without apparent reason, just as it has been in general observed to do before a storm. Nobody loved Michael; but no person neglected his own safety so much as to do or say any thing against him till he should either lose or establish his good fortune, by the gain or loss of a battle with Fasil.

Of this calm Mr. Bruce resolved to take advantage, and to set out immediately for Gondar. Accordingly,  
on

on the 17th, our travellers set out from Adowa, resuming their journey to Gondar; and on the 18th, in the morning, they ascended a hill, by a very rough stony road, and again came into the plain wherein stood Axum, once the capital of Abyssiniâ. Its ruins are very extensive; but, like those of the cities of ancient times, consist altogether of public buildings. In one square, which Mr. Bruce apprehended to have been the centre of the town, there are forty obelisks, none of which have any hieroglyphics upon them. One larger than the rest is still standing; but two of still superior dimensions are fallen. They are all of one piece of granite; and on the former is a patera extremely well carved in the Greek taste. Mr. Bruce is of opinion that these monuments are the work of Ptolemy Evergetes. Upon the face of that which is standing, there is much carving in a Gothic taste, something like metopes, triglyphs, and guttæ, disposed rudely and without order, but no characters or figures. The face looks due south, has been placed with great exactness, and preserves its perpendicular position.

Passing the convent of Abba Pantaleon, called in Abyssinia Mantilles, and the small obelisk situated on a rock above, you proceed southward by a road cut in a mountain of red marble, having on the left a parapet wall above five feet high, solid, and of the same materials. At equal distances are hewn in this wall solid pedestals, on the top of which are seen the marks where stood the colossal statues of Syrius, the Latrator Anubis, or Dog Star. One hundred and thirty-three of these pedestals, with the marks of the statues, are still in their places; but only two figures of the Dog remained at the time of Mr. Bruce's visit, much mutilated, but in a style easily distinguished to be Egyptian. These are of granite, but some of the others appear to have been of metal. There are also pedestals on which figures of the sphynx have been placed. Two magnificent flights of steps several

---

other remnants of the ancient Egyptian superstition.

---

ral hundred feet long, all of granite, exceedingly well fashioned, and still in their places, are the only remains of a magnificent temple. In the angle of the platform, where that temple stood, is the present small church of Axum, built in the place of a former one destroyed in the reign of David III.

The church is a mean building, very ill kept, and full of pigeons' dung. Here are supposed to be preserved the ark of the covenant and the copy of the law, which Menilek, the son of Solomon, is said to have stolen from his father, on his return to Ethiopia; and these were considered as the palladia of the country. Some ancient copy of the Old Testament was probably deposited here, but whatever it might be, it perished at the time of the destruction of the former church. Another relic held in high estimation escaped the same fate, by its previous removal to a church in one of the islands in the lake Tzana. It is a picture of the head of Christ crowned with thorns, said to be painted by St. Luke; and on important occasions it is brought out and carried with the army, especially in a war with Mahometans or Pagans. Within the outer gate of the church are three small enclosures, all of granite, with small octagon pillars in the angles, apparently Egyptian, on the top of which were formerly images of the dog-star. On the stone in the middle of one of these enclosures the king sits at his coronation, a ceremony which has always been performed here since the days of Paganism; and below it, where he naturally places his feet, is a large oblong slab of free-stone, with an inscription, which, though much defaced, may, says Mr. Bruce, be safely restored thus :

ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ

Axum is watered by a small stream, which flows all the year from a fountain in the narrow valley, where stand the rows of obelisks. The spring is received

---

---

Mr. Bruce leaves Axum.

---

---

ceived into a magnificent bason of 150 feet square, and thence it is carried, at pleasure, to water the neighbouring gardens, where there is little fruit, excepting pomegranates; neither are these very excellent. The present town of Axum stands at the foot of the hill, and may have about six hundred houses. There are several manufactures of coarse cotton cloth; and here too the best parchment is made of goats' skins, which is the ordinary employment of the monks. On the 19th of January, by a meridian altitude of the sun, and a mean of several altitudes of stars by night, Mr. Bruce found the latitude of Axum to be  $14^{\circ} 6' 36''$  north.

On the morning of the 20th of January, Mr. Bruce left Axum; the road was at first sufficiently even, through small vallies and meadows; he began to ascend gently, but through a road exceedingly difficult in itself, by reason of large stones standing on edge, or heaped one upon another; apparently the remains of an old large causeway, part of the magnificent works about Axum.

The last part of the journey made ample amends for the difficulties and fatigue which he had suffered in the beginning. The road, on every side, was perfumed with variety of flowering shrubs, chiefly different species of jessamine. One, in particular, of these, called agam, impregnated the whole air with the most delicious odour, and covered the small hills through which he passed, in such profusion, that he was, at times, almost overcome with its fragrance. The country all round had now the most beautiful appearance; and this was heightened by the finest of weather, and a temperature of air neither too hot nor too cold.

Soon after our travellers had lost sight of the ruins of this ancient capital of Abyssinia they overtook three travellers driving a cow before them; they had black goat skins upon their shoulders, and lances and shields in their hands; in other respects were but  
thinly

---

Singular instance of Abyssinian cruelty.

---

thinly clothed ; they appeared to be soldiers. The cow did not seem to be fattened for killing ; and it occurred to our travellers that it had been stolen. This, however, was not their business ; nor was such an occurrence at all remarkable in a country so long engaged in war. They saw that their attendants attached themselves in a particular manner to the three soldiers who were driving the cow, and held a short conversation with them. Soon after, the drivers suddenly tripped up the cow, and gave the poor animal a very rude fall upon the ground, which was but the beginning of her sufferings. One of them sat across her neck, holding down her head by the horns, the other twisted the halter about her forefeet ; while the third, who had a knife in his hand, to Mr. Bruce's very great surprise, in place of taking her by the throat, got astride upon her belly before her hind-legs, and gave a very deep wound in the upper part of her buttock. From the time Mr. Bruce had seen them throw the beast upon the ground, he had rejoiced, thinking, that when three people were killing a cow, they must have agreed to sell part of her to them ; and he was much disappointed upon hearing the Abyssinians say, that they were to pass the river to the other side, and not encamp where he intended. Upon Mr. Bruce's proposing they should bargain for part of the cow, his people answered, that they had already learned in conversation, that the men were not then going to kill her ; that she was not wholly theirs, and they could not sell her. This awakened Mr. Bruce's curiosity ; he let his attendants go forward, and staid himself, till he saw, with the utmost astonishment, two pieces, thicker and longer than our ordinary beef stakes, cut out of the higher part of the buttock of the beast. How it was done he cannot positively say ; because, judging the cow was to be killed from the moment he saw the knife drawn, he was not anxious to view that catastrophe, which was by no means an object of curiosity : whatever way it

---

The travellers arrive at Mai Shum.

---

was done, it surely was adroitly, and the two pieces were spread upon the outside of one of their shields.

One of the men still continued holding the head, while the other two were busied in curing the wound. This too was done not in an ordinary manner; the skin which had covered the flesh that was taken away was left entire, flapped over the wound, and was fastened to the corresponding part by two or more small skewers, or pins. Whether they had put any thing under the skin between that and the wounded flesh, Mr. Bruce could not tell; but, at the river side where they were, they had prepared a cataplasm of clay, with which they covered the wound; they then forced the animal to rise, and drove it on before them, to furnish them with a fuller meal when they should meet their companions in the evening.

Mr. Bruce could not but admire a dinner so truly soldier-like; nor did he ever see so commodious a manner of carrying provisions along on the road as this was. He naturally attributed this to necessity, and the love of expedition. It was a liberty, to be sure, taken with Christianity; but what transgression is not warranted to a soldier, when distressed by his enemy in the field? He could not as yet conceive that this was the ordinary banquet of citizens, and even of priests, throughout all this country. In the hospitable humane house of Janni, these living feasts had never appeared. It is true he had seen raw meat, but no part of an animal torn from it with the blood. The first shocked him as uncommon, but the other as impious.

On the 20th, the travellers pitched their tent in a small plain, by the banks of a quick clear running stream; the spot is called Mai Shum. A peasant had made a very neat little garden on both sides of the rivulet, in which he had sown abundance of onions and garlic; and he had a species of pumpkin, which Mr. Bruce thought was little inferior to a melon. This man guessed by their arms and horses that they were



## Selech-lecha.

were hunters; and he brought them a present of the fruits of his garden, and begged their assistance against a number of wild boars, which carried havoc and desolation through all his labours, marks of which were, indeed, too visible every where. Such instances of industry are very rare in this country, and demanded encouragement. Mr. Bruce paid him, therefore, for his greens; and sent two of his servants with him into the wood, and got on horseback himself. Mirza his horse, indeed, as well as his master, had recruited greatly during their stay at Adowa, under the hospitable roof of their good friend Janni. Amongst them they killed five boars, all large ones, in the space of about two hours; one of which measured six feet nine inches; and though he ran at an amazing speed near two miles, so as to be with difficulty overtaken by the horse, and was struck through and through with two heavy lances, loaded at the end with iron, no person would venture near him on foot, and he defended himself above half an hour, till, having no lances left, Mr. Bruce shot him with a horse pistol. But the misfortune was, that after their hunting had been crowned with such success, they durst not partake of the excellent venison they had acquired; for the Abyssinians hold pork of all kinds in the utmost detestation; and our traveller was now become cautious, lest he should give offence, being then at no great distance from the capital.

At seven o'clock in the morning of the 21st, they left Mai-Shum, proceeding through an open country, part sown with teff, but mostly overgrown with wild oats and high grass. They afterwards travelled among a number of low hills, ascending and descending many of them, which occasioned more pleasure than fatigue. At length they descended into a plain called Selech-lecha, the village of that name being two miles east of them. They crossed the plain through hedge-rows of flowering shrubs, among which the honeysuckle made a principal figure.

---

Several of the Abyssinian savages rise up

---

Fine trees of all sizes were everywhere interspersed; and the vine, with small black grapes of very good flavour, hung in many places in festoons, joining tree to tree, as if they had been artificially twined and intended for arbours. They now entered a close country through dēfiles between mountains, thickly covered with wood and bushes; and pitched their tent by the water side, being quite surrounded with bushes, which prevented them from being seen in any direction.

As the boha was the principal tree here, and in great beauty, being then in flower, Mr. Bruce alighted in order to examine it, when he heard a cry from his servants, "Robbers! Robbers!" He immediately mounted his mule to learn what alarm this might be, and saw, to his great surprise, part of his baggage strewed on the ground, the servants running, some leading; others on foot driving such of their mules as were unloaded before them; in a word, every thing in the greatest confusion possible. Having got to the edge of the wood, they faced about, and began to prepare their fire-arms; but Mr. Bruce forbade them to fire. He now rode immediately up to the tent, and in his way was saluted from among the bushes with many stones, one of which gave him a violent blow upon the foot. At the same instant he received another blow with a small unripe pumpkin, just upon the belly, where he was strongly defended by a coarse cotton cloth wrapped several times about him by way of sash or girdle. The top of the tent being now up, two men came forward making great complaints, but of what Mr. Bruce did not then understand. He was afterwards told that one of the Moors had taken a heap of straw which one of them was carrying to his ass, on which the proprietor had alarmed the village. Every body had taken lances and shields; but, not daring to approach for fear of the fire-arms, they had contented themselves with showering stones from their hiding-places, at a distance from among the bushes.

---

in open hostility against the travellers.

---

bushes. The tent being now pitched, and every thing in order, a treaty soon followed. The natives consented to sell them what they wanted, but at extravagant prices, which, however, our traveller was content to comply with.

Welleta Michael, grandson to Ras Michael, commanded this part of the province; and being but thirteen years of age, was not with his grandfather in the army, nor was he then at home, but at Gondar. However, his mother Ozoro Welleta Michael was at home, and her house just on the hill above. One of the king's servants had stolen away privately, and told her what happened. The same evening, a party was sent down to the village, who took the ringleaders and carried them away. They brought also a present of provisions, and excuses for what had happened, warning our travellers to be upon their guard the rest of the way.

They left this place on the 22d, at seven o'clock in the morning, and, at eight, passed a village two hundred yards on their left, without seeing any person; but, advancing half a mile further, they perceived a number of armed men from sixty to eighty; and were told they were resolved to oppose their passage, unless their comrades, taken the night before, were released. The people who attended them on the part of Welleta Michael, as their escort, considered this as an insult, and advised Mr. Bruce by all means to turn to the left to another village immediately under the hill, on which the house of Welleta Michael, mother to Welleta Gabriel their governor, was situated; as they should find sufficient assistance to force these opponents to reason. They accordingly turned to the left, and marching through thick bushes, came to the top of the hill above the village, in sight of the governor's house, just as about twenty men of the enemy's party reached the bottom of it. The governor's servants told them, that now was the time, if they advanced, to fire upon them, in which case they

## Restoration of tranquillity.

they would instantly disperse, or else they would cut them off from the village. But Mr. Bruce could not enter into the force of this reasoning, and therefore called to the twenty men to stop where they were, and send only one of their company to him; however, upon their not paying any attention, he ordered Yasmine to fire a large blunderbuss over their heads, whereupon they all fled. A number of people now flocked to our travellers from other villages; indeed Mr. Bruce imagined that some who had appeared against him came afterwards and joined his company. About half an hour after, a party came from the governor's house with twenty lances and shields, and six fire-locks, and presently the whole multitude dispersed. It was about ten o'clock when, under their escort, they arrived at the town of Siré, and pitched their tent in a strong situation, in a very deep gulley on the west extremity of the town.

Siré is situated on the brink of a very steep, narrow valley; and through this lies the road which is almost impassable. In the midst of this valley runs a brook bordered with palm-trees, some of which are grown to a considerable size, but bear no fruit; they were the first that our travellers had seen in Abyssinia. This town is larger than that of Axum; it is in form of a half-moon fronting the plain, but its greatest breadth is at the west end; all the houses are of clay, and thatched; the roofs are in form of cones, as, indeed, are all in Abyssinia. Siré is famous for a manufacture of coarse cotton cloths, which pass for current money through all the province of Tigré, and are valued at a drachm, the tenth-part of a wakea of gold, or near the value of an imperial dollar each; their breadth is a yard and quarter. Besides these, beads, needles, cohol, and incense at times only, are considered as money. Its articles depend greatly on chance, which of these articles or whether any are current for the time or not; but the latter is often not demanded; and, for the first, there are modes and  
fashions

## Siré—Maisbinni.

fashions among these barbarians; and all, except those of a certain colour and form, are useless. These people were not of a humour to buy and sell with our travellers. They were not perfectly satisfied that Michael was alive, and waited only a confirmation of the news of his defeat, to make their own terms with all strangers unfortunatè enough to fall into their hands.

Although Siré is situated in one of the finest countries in the world, like other places it has its inconveniencies. Putrid fevers, of the very worst kind, are almost constant here; and at this time there prevailed a species of these that swept away a number of people daily. Here Mr. Bruce heard the good news that Ras Michael, on the 10th of this month, had come up with Fasil at Fagitta, and entirely dispersed his army, after killing 10,000 men. This account, though not confirmed by any authority, struck all the mutinous of this province with awe; and every man returned to his duty for fear of incurring his displeasure.

On the 24th, at seven o'clock in the morning, our travellers struck their tent at Siré, and passed through a vast plain. At four they alighted at Maisbinni at the bottom of a high, steep, bare cliff of red marble, bordering on purple, and very hard. Behind this is the small village of Maisbinni; and, on the south, another still higher hill, whose top runs in an even ridge like a wall. At the bottom of this cliff, where the tent was pitched, rises the small rivulet Maisbinni, which, gentle and quiet as it then was, runs very violently in winter, first north from its source, and then winding to S. W. it falls in several cataracts, near a hundred feet high, into a narrow valley, through which it makes its way into the Tucazzé. Maisbinni is remarkable for wild and rude beauties.

The next day, at seven in the morning, leaving Maisbinni, they pursued their road, shaded with trees of many different kinds. At half an hour after eight they

---

 Dagashaha—Adega—Gourri.
 

---

they passed the river, which at this place runs west. At ten they rested in a large plain called Dagashaha; a hill in form of a cone stood single about two miles north from them; a thin straggling wood was to the S. E.; and the water, rising in spongy, boggy, and dirty ground, lay W. and was very indifferent.

Dagashaha is a bleak and disagreeable quarter; taking their departure from it, they came immediately in sight of the high mountains of Samen, where Lammalon, one of that ridge, is by much the most conspicuous; and over this lies the passage, or high road, to Gondar. They observed no villages this day from Maisbinni to Dagashaha; nor did they discern, in the face of the country, any signs of culture or marks of great population, being upon the frontiers of two provinces which had for many years been at war.

They left this station at six o'clock in the morning of the 26th, and passed the solitary village Adega, three miles on their left, the only one they had seen. At eight they came to the brink of a prodigious valley, in the bottom of which runs the Tacazzé, next to the Nile, the largest river in Upper Abyssinia. It has three spring heads or sources, like the Nile; near it is the small village Gourri.

At half past eight they began a gradual descent, at first easily enough, till they crossed the small brook called Maïtemquet, or, the Water of Baptism. They then began to descend very rapidly in a narrow path winding along the side of the mountain, all shaded with lofty timber-trees of great beauty. About three miles further they came to the edge of the stream at the principal ford of the Tacazzé, which is very firm and good; the bottom consists of small pebbles, without either sand or large stones. The river here at this time was full 200 yards broad, the water perfectly clear, and running very swiftly; it was about three feet deep. The banks of the Tacazzé are covered, at the water's edge, with tamarisks; behind which grow

high and straight trees, that seemed to have gained additional strength from having often resisted the violence of the river. Few of these ever lose their leaves, but are either covered with fruit, flower, or foliage, the whole year; indeed, abundantly with all three during the six months of fair weather. Beautiful and pleasant, however, as this river is, like every thing created, it has its disadvantages. From the falling of the first rains in March to November, it is death to sleep in the country adjoining to it, both within and without its banks; the whole inhabitants retire in villages on the top of the neighbouring mountains; and *these* are all robbers and assassins, who descend from their habitations on the heights to lie in wait for, and plunder, the travellers that pass.

The plenty of fish in this river occasions more than an ordinary number of crocodiles to resort hither. These are so daring and fearless, that when the river swells, so as to be passable only by people upon rafts, or skins blown up with wind, they are frequently carried off by these voracious and vigilant animals. There are also many hippopotami, which here are called Gomari. There are also vast multitudes of lions and hyænas in all these thickets. This river is the boundary of the province of Siré; accordingly our travellers now entered that of Samen, which was hostile to them, being commanded by Ayto Tesfos, who, since the murder of Joas, had never laid down his arms, or acknowledged his neighbour, Michael, as Ras, or the kings of his making as his sovereigns. He had remained on the top of a high rock called the *Jews' Rock*, about eight miles from the ford. For these reasons, as well as that it was the most agreeable spot our travellers had ever yet seen, they left their station on the Tacazzé with great respect.

On the 27th, a little past six in the morning, they continued some short way along the river's side, and came to Ingerohha, a small rivulet rising in the plain above, which, after a short course through a deep

---



---

Motecha—Aira—Tabul.

---



---

valley, joins the Tacazzé. At half past seven they left the river, and began to ascend the mountains, which form the south side of the valley, or banks of that river. The path is narrow, winds as much, and is as steep as the other, but not so woody. At half past eight they arrived at the top of the mountain; and, at half past nine, halted at Tabulaqué, having all the way passed among ruined villages, the monuments of Michael's cruelty or justice. They saw several people feeding cattle on the plain, and they again opened a market for flour and other provisions, which they procured in barter for cohob, incense, and beads. None but the young women appeared. They were of a lighter colour, taller, and, in general, more beautiful, than those at Kella. Their noses seem flatter than those of the Abyssinians whom our travellers had yet seen. They were inclined to be very hard in all bargains but those of one kind, in which they were most reasonable and liberal. They all agreed, that these favours ought to be given and not sold, and that all coyness and courtship was but loss of time, which might always be employed better to the satisfaction of both. These people are less gay than those at Kella, and their conversation more rough and peremptory.

Our traveller's tent was pitched at the head of Ingerohha, on the north of the plain of Tabulaqué. This river rises among the rocks at the bottom of a little eminence, in a small stream, which, from its source, runs very swiftly, and the water is warm. The peasants said, that, in winter, in time of the rains, it became hot, and smoked. It was in taste good.

On the 28th, near seven in the morning, they continued their journey; and saw the small village Motecha, on the top of the mountain, half a mile south of them. At eight, they crossed the river Aira; and, at half past eight, the river Tabul, the boundary of the district of Tabulaqué thickly covered with wood, and



and especially a sort of cane, or bamboo, solid within, called there *Shemale*, which is used in making shafts for javelins, or light darts thrown from the hand, either on foot or on horseback, in hunting or in war. They alighted on the side of *Anderassa*, rather a small stream, and which had now ceased running, but which gives the name to the district through which they were passing. Its water is muddy and ill-tasted, and falls into the *Tacazzé*, as do all the rivers they had yet passed.

The next day, at six o'clock in the morning, they proceeded through thick woods of small trees, quite overgrown, and covered with wild oats, reeds, and long grass, so that it was very difficult to find a path through them. After travelling along the edge of a hill, with the river on their left, they crossed it: it is called the *Bowiha*, and is the largest they had lately seen. At nine they encamped upon the small river *Angaria*, that gives its name to a district which begins at the *Bowiha* where *Anderassa* ends. The river *Angari* is much smaller than the *Bowiha*: it rises to the westward in a plain near *Montesegla*; after running half a mile, it falls down a steep precipice into a valley, then turns to the N. E. and, after a course of two miles and a half farther, joins the *Bowiha* a little above the ford.

The small village *Angari* lies about two miles S. S. W. on the top of a hill. *Hauza*, which seems a large town formed by a collection of many villages, is six miles south, pleasantly situated among a variety of mountains, all of different and extraordinary shapes; some are straight like columns, and some sharp in the point, and broad in the base, like pyramids and obelisks, and some like cones. All these, for the most part, inaccessible, unless with pain and danger to those that know the paths, are places of refuge and safety in time of war, and are agreeably separated from each other by small plains producing grain. Some of these, however, have at the top water and

small flats that can be sown, sufficient to maintain a number of men, independent of what is doing below them. Hauza signifies *delight* or *pleasure*, and, probably, such a situation of the country has given the name to it. It is chiefly inhabited by Mahometan merchants, is the *entre-pot* between Masuah and Gondar, and there are here people of very considerable substance.

This place the company left at seven in the morning of the 30th, keeping along the side of the river. They then ascended a high hill covered with grass and trees, through a very difficult and steep road; at the end of which they came to a small and agreeable plain, with pleasant hills on each side called Montese-gla. At half past seven they were in the middle of three villages of the same name, two to the right and one on the left, about half a mile distance. At half past nine, they passed a small river, called Daracoy, which serves as the boundary between Addergey and this small district Montese-gla. At a quarter past ten, they encamped at Addergey, near a small rivulet called Mai-Lumi, the river of limes, or lemons, in a plain scarcely a mile square, surrounded on each side with very thick wood in form of an amphitheatre. Above this wood are bare, rugged, and barren mountains. Midway in the cliff is a miserable village, that seems rather to hang than to stand there, scarcely a yard of level ground being before it to hinder its inhabitants from falling down the precipice. The wood is full of lemons and wild citrons, from which it acquires its name. Before the tent, to the westward, was a very deep valley, which terminated this little plain in a tremendous precipice. The river Mai-Lumi, rising above the village, falls into the wood, and there it divides itself into two; one branch surrounds the north of the plain, the other the south, and falls down a rock on each side of the valley where they unite, and, after having run about a quarter of a mile further, are precipitated into a cataract 150

---

The travellers greatly incommoded by an animal called Gundan.

---

feet high, and run in a direction south-west into the 'Taczacé. This river was now but small, although it is violent in winter; beyond this valley are five hills; on the top of each is a village. The Shum resides in the one that is in the middle. He gave our travellers seemingly a hearty welcome, but had malice in his heart against them; and only waited to know for certainty if it was a proper time to gratify his avarice. A report was spread about with great confidence, that Ras Michael had been defeated by Fasil; that Gondar had rebelled, and Woggora was all in arms; so that it was certain loss of life to attempt the passage of Lamalmon.

The hyænas this night devoured one of the best of our travellers' mules. They are here in great plenty, and so are lions; the roaring and grumbling of the latter, in the part of the wood nearest their tent, greatly disturbed their beasts, and prevented them from eating their provender. But they were still more incommoded by a smaller animal, a large black ant, little less than an inch long, which, coming out from under the ground, demolished their carpets, which they cut all into shreds, and part of the lining of the tent likewise, and every bag or sack they could find. These they had first seen in great numbers at Angari; but here they were intolerable. Their bite causes a considerable inflammation, and the pain is greater than that which rises from the bite of a scorpion; they are called *Gundan*.

On the 1st of February the Shum sent his people to value, as he said, their merchandise, that they might pay custom. Mr. Bruce humoured them so far as to open the cases where were the telescopes and quadrant; and they could only wonder at things such as they had never before seen.

On the 2d the Shum came himself, and a violent altercation ensued. He insisted upon Michael's defeat; Mr. Bruce told him that the contrary was the fact, and begged him to beware lest it should be told to the

---

One of Yasine's asses attacked by an hyæna.

---

Ras upon his return that he had propagated such a falsehood. After some violent words he held a consultation with his people for about half an hour, after which he came in again, seemingly quite another man, and said he would dispatch the travellers on the morrow, and send them that evening some provisions. As he softened his tone, so did Mr. Bruce his. He gave him a small present, and the Shum went away repeating his promises. But all that evening passed without provision, and all next day without his coming.

On the 4th of February they left Addergey: hunger pressing them, they were prepared to do it earlier, and for this they had been up since five in the morning; but their loss of a mule obliged them, when they packed up their tent, to arrange their baggage differently. While employed in making ready for their departure, which was just at the dawn of day, a hyæna, unseen by any, fastened upon one of Yasiné's asses, and had almost pulled his tail away. A boy, who was servant to Yasiné, saw the hyæna first, and flew to Mr. Bruce's musket. Yasiné was disjoining the poles of the tent, and, having one half of the largest in his hand, he ran to the assistance of his ass, and in that moment the musket went off, luckily charged with one ball, which gave Yasiné a flesh wound between the thumb and forefinger of his left hand. The boy instantly threw down the musket, which had terrified the hyæna, and made him let go the ass; but he stood ready to fight Yasiné, who, not amusing himself with the choice of weapons, gave him so rude a blow with a tent-pole upon his head, that it felled him to the ground; others, with pikes, put an end to his life. Yasiné's wound was seen to be a trifle; but that of the poor ass was very severe. The stump remained, the tail hanging by a piece of it, which they were obliged to cut off. The next operation was actual cautery; but as they had made no bread for breakfast, their fire had been early out. They, therefore,

## Angueah.

fore, were obliged to tie the stump round with whipcord, till they could get fire enough to heat an iron.

They continued their journey along the side of a hill, through thick wood and high grass; then descended into a steep, narrow valley, the sides of which had been shaded with high trees, but in burning the grass the trees were consumed likewise; and the shoots from the roots were some of them above eight feet high since the tree had thus suffered that same year. The river Angueah runs through the middle of this valley; after receiving the small streams, before mentioned, it makes its way to the Tacazzé. It is a very clear swift-running river, something less than the Bowiha.

When they had just reached the river-side, they saw the Shum coming from the right hand across them. There were nine horsemen in all, and fourteen or fifteen beggarly footmen. He had a well-dressed young man going before him carrying his gun, and had only a whip in his own hand; the rest had lances in theirs; but none of the horsemen had shields. It was universally agreed, that this seemed to be a party set for them, and that he probably had others before appointed to join him. Upon the first appearance, our travellers had stopped on this side of the river; but Welleta Michael's men, who were to accompany them to Lamalmon, and Janni's servant, told them to cross the river, and make what speed they could, as the Shum's government ended on this side.

Mr. Bruce got immediately upon horseback; and as soon as they observed them drive their beasts into the river, one of their horsemen came galloping up, while the others continued at a smart walk. When the horseman was within twenty yards' distance of them, Mr. Bruce called upon him to stop; and, as he valued his life, not to approach nearer. On this he made no difficulty to obey, but seemed rather inclined to turn back. After much altercation, it was agreed that

that the Shum, and his son with the gun, should pass the river.

The Shum complained violently that they had left Addergey without his leave, and now were attacking him in his own government upon the high-road. He said that two ounces of gold were what his dues had been rated at, and he would either have that, or follow them to Debra Toon. "Shum," said Mr. Bruce, "you intend to follow us, apparently with a design to do us some harm. Now we are going to Debra Toon, and you are going thither. If you chuse to go with us, you may in all honour and safety; but your servants shall not be allowed to join you, nor you join them; and if they but attempt to do us harm, we will for certain revenge ourselves on you. There is a piece of ordnance," continued he, shewing him a large blunderbuss, "a cannon, that will sweep fifty such fellows as you to eternity in a moment. This shall take care of them, and we shall take care of you; but join you they shall not till we are at Debra Toon." The young man that carried the gun, the case of which had never been off, desired leave to speak with his father, as they now began to look upon themselves as prisoners. The conversation lasted about five minutes; at length the Shum said, he would make a proposal:—Since Mr. Bruce had no merchandise, and was going to Ras Michael, he would accept of the red cloth, its value being about a crown, provided they swore to make no complaint of him at Gondar, nor speak of what had happened at Debra Toon; while he likewise would swear, after having joined his servants, that he would not again pass that river. Peace was concluded upon these terms. Mr. Bruce gave him a piece of red Surat cotton cloth, and added some cohol, incense, and beads for his wives. He gave to the young man that carried the gun two strings of bugles to adorn his legs, for which he seemed wonderfully grateful. The Shum returned not  
with

with a very placid countenance; his horsemen joined him in the middle of the stream, and away they went soberly together.

Hauza was from this place S. E. eight miles distant. Its mountains, of so many uncommon forms, had a very romantic appearance. At one o'clock they alighted at the foot of one of the highest, called *Debra Toon*, about half way between the mountain and village of that name, which was on the side of the hill about a mile N. W. Still further to the N. W. is a desert hilly district, called *Adebarea*, the country of the slaves, as being the neighbourhood of the *Shangalla*, the whole country between being waste and uninhabited.

The mountains of *Waldubba*, resembling those of *Adebarea*, lay north about four or five miles. *Waldubba*, which signifies the Valley of the *Hyæna*, is a territory entirely inhabited by the monks, who, for mortification's sake, have retired to this unwholesome, hot, and dangerous country, voluntarily to spend their lives in penitence and prayer. This, too, is the only retreat of great men in disgrace or in disgust. These first shave their hair, and put on a cowl like the monks, renouncing the world for solitude, and taking vows which they resolve to keep no longer than exigencies require; after which they return to the world again, leaving their cowl and sanctity in *Waldubba*. The monks are held in great veneration; are believed by many to have the gift of prophecy, and some of them to work miracles; and are very active instruments to stir up the people in time of trouble.

Violent fevers perpetually reign there. The inhabitants are all of the colour of a corpse; and their neighbours, the *Shangalla*, by constant inroads, destroy many of them, though lately they have been stopped, as they say, by the prayers of the monks: but the real cause is the small-pox, which has greatly

reduced the strength and number of the Shangalla, and extinguished, to a man, whole tribes of them.

The water is both scarce and bad at Debra Toon, there being but one spring, or fountain; and it was exceedingly ill tasted. Our travellers did not intend to make this a station; but, having sent a servant to Hauza to buy a mule in room of that which the hyæna had eaten, they were afraid to leave their man, who was not yet come forward, lest he should fall in with the Shum of Addergey, who might stop the mule for arrears of customs. They departed, however, at seven o'clock in the morning of the 5th, and came to the edge of a deep valley bordered with wood, the descent of which is very steep. The Anzo, large and more rapid than the Angueah, runs through the middle of this valley; its bed is full of large, smooth stones, and the sides composed of hard rock, and difficult to descend; the stream is equally clear and rapid with the other. They ascended the valley on the other side, through the most difficult road they had met with since that of the valley of Siré. At ten they found themselves in the middle of three villages, two to the right, and one on the left, called Adamara, from Adama a mountain, on the east side of which is Tchober. At eleven they encamped at the foot of the mountain Adama, in a small piece of level ground, after passing a pleasant wood of no considerable extent. Adama, in Aniharie, signifies *pleasant*; and nothing can be more wildly so than the view from this station. Tchober is close at the foot of the mountain, surrounded on every side, except the north, by a deep valley covered with wood. On the other side of this valley are the broken hills which constitute the rugged banks of the Anzo. On the point of one of these, most extravagantly shaped, is the village Shahagaanah, projecting as it were over the river; and, behind these, the irregular and broken mountains of Salent appear, especially those around Hauza, in forms which European mountains never wear; and still higher, above these, is the long ridge of



---

 Abberga'lé—Tamben—Mai Agam.
 

---

of Samen, which run along in an even stretch till they are interrupted by the high conical top of Lamalmon, reaching above the clouds, and reckoned to be the highest hill in Abyssinia, over the steepest part of which, by some unknown fatality, the road of all caravans to Gondar must lie.

As soon as they passed the Anzo, immediately on their right was that part of Waldubba, full of deep valleys and woods, in which the monks used to hide themselves from the incursions of the Shangalla. Above this is Adamara, where the Mahometans have considerable villages; and, by their populousness and strength, have greatly added to the safety of the monks. Still higher than these villages is Tchober, where our travellers now encamped.

On the left hand, after passing the Anzo, all is Shaha-gaanah, till you come to the river Zarima. It extends in an east and west direction almost parallel to the mountains of Samen, and in this territory are several considerable villages; the people are much addicted to robbery, and rebellion, in which they were engaged at this time. Above Salent is Abbergalé, and above that Tamben, which is one of the principal provinces in Tigré, commanded at that time by Kessa Yasous, an officer of the greatest merit and reputation in the Abyssinian army.

At six in the morning of the 6th, they left Tchober, and passed a wood on the side of the mountain. At a quarter past eight they crossed the river Zarima, a clear stream running over a bottom of stones. It is about as large as the Anzo. On the banks of this river, and all this day, they passed under trees larger and more beautiful than they had seen since leaving the Tacazzé. They now entered a narrow defile between two mountains, where ran another rivulet; they continued advancing along the side of it, till the valley became so narrow as to leave no room but in the bed of the rivulet itself. It is called Mai-Agam, or the water or brook of jessamin, and falls into the Zarima.

rima. It was dry at the mouth, (the water being there absorbed and hidden under the sand,) but above, where the ground was firmer, ran a brisk stream of excellent water, and it has the appearance of being broad, deep, and rapid, in winter. At ten they encamped upon its banks, which are here bordered with high frees or cummel, at this time both loaded with fruit and flowers. Here is also a variety of other curious trees and plants. Mai-Agam consists of three villages; one two miles distant, east-and-by-north, one at some distance, N. N. W.; the third at one mile distance, S. E. by south.

Early on the 7th, they began to ascend the mountain; at a quarter past seven the village Lik lay east of them. Murass, a country full of low but broken mountains, and deep narrow valleys, bears N. W.; and Walkayt in the same direction, but farther off. At a quarter past eight, Gingerohha, distant from them about a mile S. W.; it is a village situated upon a mountain that joins Lamalmon. Two miles to the N. E. is the village Taguzait on the mountain which they were ascending.

A little before nine o'clock they pitched their tent on a small plain called Dippebaha, on the top of the mountain, above a hundred yards from a spring, which scarcely was abundant enough to supply them with water, in quality as indifferent as it was scanty. There are three small villages so near each other that they may be said to compose one. Near them is the church of St. George, on the top of a small hill to the east-ward, surrounded with large trees.

Having left this station the next day at seven, they had two small villages on their left; one on the S. E. distant two miles, the other on the south, one mile off; they are called Wora, and so is the territory for some space on each side of them; but, beyond the valley, all is Shahagaanah to the root of Lamalmon. At a quarter past seven, the village of Gingerohha was three miles on their right; and they were now ascending Lemalmon, through a very narrow road,

## Kedus--Lamalmon.

or rather path, for it scarcely was two feet wide any where. It was a spiral winding up the side of the mountain, always on the very brink of a precipice. Torrents of water, which in winter carry prodigious stones down the side of this mountain, had divided this path into several places, and opened a view of that dreadful abyss below, which few heads can bear to look down upon. They were here obliged to unload their baggage, and, by slow degrees, crawl up the hill, carrying it little by little upon their shoulders round these chasms where the road was intersected. The mountains grew steeper, the paths narrower, and the breaches more frequent, as they ascended. Scarcely were their mules, though unloaded, able to scramble up. After two hours of constant toil, at nine o'clock they alighted in a small plain called Kedus, or St. Michael, from a church and village of that name, neither beast nor man being able to go a step further.

The plain of St. Michael is at the foot of a steep cliff which terminates the west side of Lamalmon. It is here perpendicular like a wall, and a few trees only upon the top of the cliff. Over this precipice flow two streams of water, which never are dry, but run in all seasons. They fall into a wood at the bottom of this cliff, and preserve it in continual verdure all the year, though the plain itself below is all rent into chasms, and cracked by the heat of the sun. These two streams form a considerable rivulet in the plain of St. Michael, and are a great relief both to men and cattle in this tedious and difficult passage over the mountain.

The air on Lamalmon is pleasant and temperate. Our travellers here found their appetite return, with a cheerfulness, lightness of spirits, and agility of body, which indicated that their nerves had again resumed their wonted tone, which they had lost in the low, poisonous, and sultry air on the coast of the Red Sea. The sun here is indeed hot; but in the morning a cool breeze never fails, which increases as the sun rises

5 high.

high. In the shade it is always cool. Lamalmon is the pass through which lies the road of all caravans to Gondar. It is here they take an account of all baggage and merchandise, which they transmit to the Negadé Ras, or chief officer of the customs at Gondar, by a man whom they send to accompany the caravan. There is also a present, or awide, due to the private proprietor of the ground; and this is levied with great rigor and violence, and, for the most part, with injustice; so that this station, which, by the establishment of the custom-house, and nearness to the capital, should be in a particular manner attended to by government, is always the place where the first robberies and murders are committed in unsettled times.

The persons whose right it was to levy contributions were two, a father and son; the old man was dressed very decently, spoke little, but smoothly, and had a very good carriage. He professed a violent hatred to all Mahometans, on account of their religion. In the evening the son, who seemed to be the active man, came to Mr. Bruce's tent, and brought them a quantity of bread and bouza, which his father had ordered before. He seemed to be much taken with the fire-arms, and was very inquisitive about them. Mr. Bruce shewed him the manner of shooting flying, there being quails in abundance, and wild pigeons, of which he killed several on wing, which left the young man in the utmost astonishment. Having got on horseback, Mr. Bruce next went through the exercise of the Arabs, with a long spear and a short javelin. He was wonderfully taken with the fierce and fiery appearance of the horse, and, at the same time, with his docility, the form of the saddle, bridle, and accoutrements. He at last threw the sandals off his feet, twisted his upper garment into his girdle, and set off at so furious a rate, that our traveller could not help doubting whether he was in his sober understanding. It was not long before he  
came

---

The travellers ascend to its top.

---

came back, and with him a man servant, carrying a sheep and a goat, and a woman with a jar of honey-wine. Mr. Bruce now put his horse to a gallop, and, with one of the barrels of the gun, shot a pigeon, and immediately fired the other into the ground. This was repeated several times at his desire; after which he went into the tent, where he invited himself to Mr. Bruce's house at Gondar; where he was to teach him every thing he had seen. They now swore perpetual friendship; and a horn or two of hydromel being emptied, Mr. Bruce spoke in favour of his fellow-travellers, (whom he was apprehensive of being obliged to leave behind with men who would shew them no favor,) and obtained a promise that they should have leave to set out together. He would, moreover, take no awide, and said he would be favourable in his report at Gondar. At this time a servant of Michael's sent by Petros, Janni's brother, arrived, and put an end to all their difficulties. The young soldier also kept his word, and a mere trifle of awide was given, rather by the Moor's own desire than from demand; and the report of their baggage, and dues thereon, were as low as could be wished. Their friend had likewise sent a servant of his own to Gondar with the billet to accompany the caravan. This man reported that Ras Michael had actually beaten Fasil, and forced him to retire to the other side of the Nile, and was then in Maitsha, where it was thought he would remain with the army all the rainy season. This was just what our traveller wished, as it brought him at once to the neighbourhood of the sources of the Nile, without the smallest shadow of fear or danger.

On the 9th, at seven o'clock, they took leave of the friends whom they had so newly acquired, and began to ascend what still remained of the mountain, which, though steep and full of bushes, was much less difficult than that which they had passed. At a quarter past seven they arrived at the top of Lamalmon, which

---

---

The Jews' Rock.

---

---

which has, from below, the appearance of being sharp-pointed. On the contrary, they were much surprised to find there a large plain, part in pasture, but more bearing grain. It is full of springs, and seems to be the great reservoir whence arise most of the rivers that water this part of Abyssinia. A multitude of streams issue from the summit in all directions; the springs boil out from the earth in large quantities, capable of turning a mill. They plow, sow, and reap, here at all seasons; and the husbandman must blame his own indolence, and not the soil, if he has not three harvests. Our travellers saw, in one place, people busy cutting down wheat; immediately next to it, others at the plough; and the adjoining field had green corn in the ear; a little further, it was not an inch above the ground.

Lamalmon is on the N. W. part of the mountains of Samen. That of Gingerohha, with two pointed tops, joins it on the north, and ends these mountains here, and is separated from the plain of St. Michael by a very deep gully. Neither Lamalmon nor Gingerohha, though higher than the mountains of Tigré, is equal in height to some of those of Samen. Those to the S. E. seem to be much higher, especially that sharp-pointed hill Amba Gideon, the present residence of the governor of Samen, Ayto Tesfos. This is otherwise called the *Jews' Rock*, and is famous in the history of this country for the many revolts of the Jews against the Abyssinian kings. This mountain is every where so steep and high, that it is not enough to say against the will, but without the assistance, of those above, no one from below can venture to ascend. On the top is a large plain, affording plenty of pasture, as well as room for plowing and sowing for the maintenance of the army; and there is water, at all seasons, in great plenty, and even fish in the streams upon it; so that, although the inhabitants of the mountain had been often besieged for a considerable time together, they suffered little inconvenience from it,

nor ever were taken unless by treason; except by Christopher de Gama and his Portuguese, who are said, by their own historians, to have stormed this rock, and put the Mahometan garrison to the sword.

The language of Lamalmon is Amharic; but there are many villages where the language of the Falasha is spoken. These are the ancient inhabitants of the mountains, who still preserve the religion, language, and manners, of their ancestors, and live in villages by themselves. Their number is now considerably diminished, and this has proportionally lowered their power and spirit. They are now wholly addicted to agriculture, hewers of wood, and carriers of water, and the only potters and masons in Abyssinia. In the former profession they excel greatly; and, in general, live better than the other Abyssinians; which these, in revenge, attribute to a skill in magic, not to superior industry. Their villages are generally strongly situated out of the reach of marching armies, otherwise they would be constantly rifled, partly from hatred, and partly from hopes of finding money.

At half past seven in the morning of the 10th, the party proceeded along the plain on the top of Lamalmon; it is called Lama; and a village of the same name bore about two miles east. At eight they passed two villages called Mocken, one W. by N. at one mile and a half, the other S. E. two miles distant. At half past eight they crossed the river Macara, a considerable stream running with a very great current, which is the boundary between Woggora and Lamalmon. At nine o'clock they encamped at some small villages called Macara, under a church named Yasous. The ground was every where burnt up; and, though the nights were very cold, they had not observed the smallest dew since their first ascending the mountain. The province of Woggora begins at Macara: though the same signifies *stony* or *rocky* province, it is all plain, and reckoned the granary of Gondar on this side. The wheat of Woggora is not

---

 Girama—Shimbra Zuggan—Tamamo.
 

---

good, owing probably to the height of that province. It makes an indifferent bread, and is much less esteemed than that of Foggora and Dembea, low flat provinces, sheltered with hills, that lie upon the side of the lake Tzana.

They left Macara at seven in the morning of the 12th, still travelling through the plain of Woggora. The country now grows inconceivably populous: vast herds of cattle of all kinds feed on every side, having large and beautiful horns, exceedingly wide, and bosses upon their backs like camels; their colour is mostly black. At nine passed the river Girama, which runs N. N. W. and terminates the district of Lamalmon, beginning that of Giram. At ten, the church of St. George remaining on their right, one mile distant, they crossed a river called Shimbra Zuggan, and encamped about two hundred yards from it. The valley of that name is more broken and uneven than any part they had met with since they ascended Lamalmon.

At seven in the morning, of the next day, they proceeded still along the plain; and saw above twenty villages on their right and left, ruined and destroyed from the lowest foundation by Ras Michael in his late march to Gondar. At half past eight the church of Mariam was about a hundred yards on their left. At ten they encamped under Tamamo. The country here is full of people; the villages are mostly ruined, which in some places they are rebuilding. It is wholly sown with grain of different kinds, but more especially with wheat. For the production of this grain, the people had every where extirpated the wood, and now labour under a great scarcity of fuel. Since passing Lamalmon, the only substitute for it was cow's and mule's dung, which is collected, made into cakes, and dried in the sun. From Addergey hither, salt is the current-money, in large purchases, such as sheep or other cattle: cohol and pepper, for smaller articles, such as flower, butter, fowls, &c.

The



Gondar—Tchagassa—Tocutcho.

The price of provisions began to augment considerably in proportion as they approached the capital.

At forty minutes past ten were gratified with the sight of Gondar. Soon after they began to ascend about two miles through a broken road, having on their right, in the valley below, the river Tchagassa; and here begins the territory of that name. Still descending the hill, they passed a large spring of water, called Bambola, together with several plantations of sugar-canes which grow here *from the seed*. At eleven o'clock the village Tchagassa was about half a mile distant from them on their right, on the other side of the river. It is inhabited by Mahometans; as is Waalia, another small one near it. At twelve o'clock they passed the river Tchagassa over a bridge of three arches; the middle of which is Gothic, the two smaller Roman. This bridge, though small, is solid and well cemented, built with stone by order of Facilidas, who probably employed those of his subjects who had retained the arts of the Portuguese, but not their religion.

The Tchagassa has very steep rocky banks: it is so deep, though narrow, that, without this bridge, it would scarcely be passable. They encamped at a small distance from it, but nearer Gondar. Here again our travellers met with trees, (small ones indeed,) but the first they had seen since leaving Lamalmon, excepting the usual groves of cedars. It is the Virginia cedar, or oxy-cedros, in this country called *Arz*, with which their churches are constantly surrounded.

On the 15th, they began to ascend the mountain; and passed a village on their left. Soon after they passed Tiba and Mariam, two churches, the one on their right, the other on their left, about half a mile distant; and near them several small villages, inhabited by Falasha, masons and thatchers of houses, employed at Gondar. At half past eight they came to the village Tocutcho, and in a quarter of an hour,

---

---

Angrah—Woggora.

---

---

passed the river of that name, and in a few minutes rested on the river Angrah, about half a mile from Gondar.

Tchagassa is the last of the many small districts which, together, compose Woggora, generally understood to be dependant on Samen, though often, from the turbulent spirit of its chiefs, struggling for independency, as at the present time, but sure to pay for it immediately after. In fact, though large, it is too near Gondar, to be suffered to continue in rebellion: and being rich and well cultivated, it derives its support from the capital, as being the mart of its produce. It is certainly one of the most fruitful provinces in Abyssinia; but the inhabitants are miserably poor, notwithstanding their three-fold harvests; whereas in Egypt, beholden to this country alone for its fertility, one moderate harvest gives plenty everywhere.

Woggora is full of large ants, and prodigious swarms of rats and mice, which consume immense quantities of grain; to these plagues may be added another, the greatest of them all, bad government, which speedily destroys all the advantages of nature, climate, and situation.

On the arrival of Mr. Bruce in the Abyssinian capital he found that both the king and Ras Michael, for whom he had letters, were both absent; and, though he had others for Petros, the brother of his friend Janni, and the Greeks, these could be of no use, as they too were out of town. There was not, therefore, a single person to whom he could apply for any thing. The caravan, on its approach to the city, had been met by many Mahometans, who were all apprized of his coming, and to whom he explained his situation. One of these, named Hagi Saleh, advised our traveller to continue to wear his Moorish dress, and put him in possession of the house provided for Mahomet Gibberti, where it might remain unmolested by the fanatical priests till he should obtain some protection  
from

---

The travellers arrive at the Abyssinian capital.

---

from government or the great people of the country. The Moorish town is situated at the junction of the river Angrah with the Kahha, a smaller stream, and consists of 3000 houses, among which, some are very good and spacious. That destined for Mahomet Gibberti, in which Mr. Bruce now took up his residence, was a very neat habitation.

By Janni's servant who accompanied Mr. Bruce from Adowa, his kind and friendly master had written to Ayto Aylo, a nobleman of great credit, riches, and influence. He was the constant patron of the Greeks, as he had also been of the Catholics who had ventured into this country, and afterwards been obliged to leave it. About seven in the evening of the day on which Mr. Bruce arrived at Gondar, Hagi Saleh was much alarmed by the appearance of a number of armed men at his door; and his surprize increased on seeing Ayto Aylo, who was not known to have ever been in the Moorish town before, descend from his mule and uncover his head and shoulders, as if he had been approaching a person of the first distinction. A contention of civilities immediately followed. Mr. Bruce soon found that his visitor perfectly understood Tigré and Amharic, the two native languages of Abyssinia, and had a little knowledge of Arabic, that is, he understood it when spoken, for he could neither read nor write it, and spoke it very ill. The beginning of their discourse was in Arabic, and embarrassed enough; but they had plenty of interpreters in all languages. The first bashfulness being removed on both sides the conversation began in Tigré, which, since Michael had become Ras, was the language most commonly used in Gondar. Aylo was not a little surprized to hear Mr. Bruce speak it so well, and observed, that there was no fear but that he would make his way. He informed our traveller that Michael's son, Welled Howaryat, had come from the camp ill of a fever, and that his friends were afraid it was the small-pox; that they had learned  
from

---

The government and manners of the inhabitants of Gondar.

---

from Janni that Mr. Bruce had saved the lives of many young people attacked with that disease at Adowa; that the Iteghe or queen-mother had desired him to attend the next morning, and that he himself would accompany Mr. Bruce to Koscam to introduce him to the princess. Mr. Bruce replied that he was ready to be guided by his good advice; acknowledging, at the same time, that he had been much distressed by the absence of the Greeks and Mahomet Gibberti, but especially by the apprehensions of Petros, who, as he found, had been frightened by a conversation with Abba Salama, in which the latter, a high dignitary of the Abyssinian church, had with some warmth expressed his displeasure that a Frank (meaning Mr. Bruce) should be permitted to come to Gondar. "Ras Michael and Abba Salama are not friends," rejoined Ayto Aylo; "and if you can do any good for Michael's son, Welled Hawaryat, I will answer for it that one word of his will stop the mouth of a hundred Abba Salamas."

Abba Salama at that time filled the post of Acab Saat, or *guardian of the fire*. It is the third dignity of the church, and he is the first religious officer in the palace. He had a very large revenue, and still greater influence. He was exceeding rich, and a man of the very worst life possible: though he had taken the vows of poverty and chastity, it was said he had at that time above seventy mistresses in Gondar. His way of seducing women was as extraordinary as the number seduced. It was not by gifts, attendance, or flattery, the usual means employed on such occasions. When he had fixed his desires upon a woman, he forced her to comply, under pain of excommunication. He was exceedingly eloquent and bold; was a man of a pleasing countenance, short, and of a fair complexion; indifferent, or rather averse to wine, but a monstrous glutton; nice in what he had to eat, to a degree scarcely before known in Abyssinia; a mortal enemy to all white people, whom he classed

---

Mr. Bruce arrives at the palace of Koscam.

---

classed under the name of Franks, for which the Greeks, uniting their interests at favourable times, had often very nearly overset him.

The next morning about ten o'clock, Mr. Bruce, in his Moorish dress, went to Ayto Aylo, and found him with several great plates of bread, melted butter, and honey, before him, of one of which he and our traveller ate; the rest were given to the Moors, and other people present. There was with him a priest of Koscam, and they all set out for that palace, as soon as they had finished breakfast. They passed the brook of St. Raphael, a suburb of Gondar; and, upon coming in sight of the palace of Koscam, they all uncovered their heads, and rode slowly. As Aylo was all-powerful with the Itegehe, indeed her first counsellor and friend, their admittance was easy and immediate. They alighted, and were shewn into a low room in the palace. Ayto Aylo went immediately to the Itegehe, or queen, to enquire about Welled Hawaryat, who was then ill, and his audience lasted two long hours. He returned to them with the news, that Welled Hawaryat was much better, by a medicine a saint from Waldubba had given him, which consisted in some characters written with common ink upon a tin plate, which characters were washed off by a medical liquor, and then given him to drink. It was agreed, however, that the complaint was the small-pox; and the good it had done him was, he ate heartily of brind, or raw beef, after it, though he had not eaten before since his arrival, but called perpetually for drink. Aylo said that he was to remain at Koscam till towards evening, and desired Mr. Bruce to meet him at his house when it grew dark, and to bring Petros with him if he had returned.

On our traveller's arrival at Hagi Saleh's house, he found Petros waiting for him. It was easy to perceive in his countenance that he had not succeeded according to his wish, in his interview with Michael, or that he had met with something that had ruffled and frightened

---

---

Woosheka flayed alive.

---

---

ened him. The latter was actually the case; for going to the Ras's tent, he had seen the stuffed skin of the unfortunate Woosheka, whom Michael had caused to be flayed alive, and with whom Petros was well acquainted, swinging upon a tree, and drying in the wind. He was so terrified, and struck with such horror at the sight, that he fell into a kind of hysteric fit, cried, started, laughed hideously, and seemed as if he had almost lost his senses. It turned out that he had not spoken one word upon the subject from fear, but had gone to the tent of Negade Ras Mahomet, the chief of the Moors at Gondar, and principal merchant in Abyssinia, who, seeing the fright he was in, and knowing the cause, had repaired without him, in company with Keffa Yasous, to the Ras, and informed him of Mr. Bruce's arrival, and the behaviour of Abba Salama. The Ras's answer, was, "Abba Salama is an ass, and they that fear him are worse. Do I command in Gondar only when I stay there? My dog is of more consequence in Gondar than Abba Salama." After a short pause, he continued, "Let Yagoube stay where he is in the Moors' town; Saleh will let no priests trouble him there." Mr. Bruce, when he went at night to Ayto Aylo and Petros, had told his story that Aylo and he were equally afraid.

Mr. Bruce had taken his leave, and was returning with Saleh; but before he had reached the door, Aylo followed and told him that Welled Hawaryat was very ill, and the Itegehe Ozoro Altash his wife, and Ozoro Esther desired that he would call to see him the following days. One of his daughters had been ill some time before his arrival, and she too was thought in great danger. Accordingly the next day Mr. Bruce and Aylo went to Koscam, and were just entering the palace-door when they saw a large procession of monks, who carried with them a large cross and a picture in a very dirty gilt frame. They were informed by Ayto Heikel, the chamberlain, that three

---

The Abyssinian capital infected with the plague.

---

great saints from Waldubba, one of whom had neither eaten nor drunk for twenty years, had promised to cure Welled Hawaryat by laying a picture of the Virgin Mary and the cross upon him, and therefore Ayto Aylo wished Mr. Bruce not to be seen or interfere in the affair. "I assure you," replied the latter, "that I shall strictly obey you. There is no sort of reason for my meddling in this affair with such associates. If they can cure him by a miracle, I am sure it is the easiest kind of cure of any, and will not do his constitution the least harm afterwards, which is more than I can promise for medicines in general; but remember what I say to you; it will indeed be a miracle if both the father and the daughter are not dead before to-morrow night." Mr. Bruce returned to the Moors' town, and that same night his prediction was fully verified.

The contagion from Māsuaḥ and Adowa had spread all over Gondar. Aylo came next morning to Mr. Bruce, and told him that the faith in saints and pictures was completely abandoned, and that it was the desire of the queen and Ozoro Esther that he should remove to the Iteḡhe's palace at Koscam, where all their children and grand-children were under her care. Mr. Bruce accordingly changed his Moorish dress for an Abyssinian, that, as he had attended a number of Moorish children labouring under the same disease, he might carry with him no infection. His hair was cut round, curled, and perfumed, in the Amharic fashion, and he was thenceforward, in external appearance, a perfect Abyssinian.

Mr. Bruce, before he entered on his charge of physician, stated to those present in the palace the disagreeable task now imposed upon him, a stranger without acquaintance or protection, having the language but imperfectly, and without power or controul among them. He professed his intention of doing his utmost, although the disease was much more serious and fatal in this country than in his own: but he insisted on one condition, which

---

Mr. Bruce restores several from the contagion.

---

was, that no directions as to regimen or management, even of the most trifling kind, as they might think, should be suffered, without his permission and superintendence; otherwise he washed his hands of the consequence. This being assented to by all present, Mr. Bruce set the servants to work. There were apartments enough. He opened all the doors and windows, fumigating them with incense and myrrh in abundance, and washed them with warm water and vinegar. The common and fatal regimen in this country, and in most parts in the east, has been to keep their patient from feeling the smallest breath of air; hot drink, a fire, and a quantity of covering, are added in Abyssinia, and the doors shut so close as even to keep the room in darkness, whilst this heat is further augmented by the constant burning of candles.

Ayabdar, Ozoro Altash's remaining daughter, and the son of Mariam Barea, were both taken ill at the same time, and happily recovered. A daughter of Kasmati Boro, by a daughter of Kasmati Eshtes, died, and her mother, though she survived, was a long time ill afterwards. Ayabdar was very much marked; so was Mariam Barea's son. At this time Ayto Confu, son of Kasmati Netcho by Ozoro Esther, had arrived from Tcherkin, a lad of very great hopes, though not then fourteen. He came to see his mother, without my knowledge or her's, and was infected likewise. Last of all, the infant child of Michael, the child of his old age, took the disease; and, though the weakest of all the children, recovered best.

The patients, being all likely to do well, were removed to a large house of Kasmati Eshte, which stood within the boundaries of Koscam, while the rooms underwent another lustration and fumigation; after which they all returned; and Mr. Bruce, as his fee, was presented with the neat and convenient house formerly belonging to Basha Eusebius, which had a separate entry, without going through the palace.

It was not till the 9th of March that Mr. Bruce







Handwritten text, likely a signature or title, written vertically along the right side of the image. The text is difficult to decipher but appears to include the name 'W. P. ...'.

---

His first interview with Ras Michael at Azazo.

---

had his first interview with Ras Michael at Azazo. He was dressed in a coarse dirty cloth, wrapt about him like a blanket, and another like a table-cloth folded about his head. He was lean, old, and apparently much fatigued; sat stooping upon an excellent mule that carried him speedily without shaking him; he had also sore eyes. As they saw the place where he was to alight was marked by four cross lances, and a cloth thrown over them like a temporary tent upon an eminence, he did not speak to him till he alighted. Petros and a Greek priest, besides servants, were the only people with Mr. Bruce. They alighted at the same time he did, and afterwards, with anxiety enough, deputed the Greek priest, who was a friend of Michael, to tell him who Mr. Bruce was, and that he was come to meet him. The soldiers made way, and our traveller came up, took him by the hand, and kissed it. He looked him broad in the face for a second, repeated the ordinary salutation in Tigré, "How do you do? I hope you are well?" and pointed to a place where he was to sit down. A thousand complaints, and a thousand orders, came immediately before him, from a thousand mouths; and the visitors were nearly smothered. In some minutes after came the king, who passed at some distance to the left of him; and Michael was then led out of the shelter of his tent to the door, where he was supported on foot till the king passed by, having first pulled off the towel that was upon his head, after which he returned to his seat in the tent again.

The king had gone past about a quarter of a mile, when Kefla Yasous came from him with orders to the Ras. He brought with him a young nobleman, Ayto Engedan, who, by his dress, having his upper garment twisted in a particular manner about his waist, shewed that he was carrier of a special message from the king. The crowd had by this time shut our travellers quite out, and made a circle round the Ras, in which they were not included. They were upon the point of going away, when Kefla Yasous said to him,

---

Twelve of the chiefs of the Galla have their eyes put out.

---

“ I think Engedan has the king’s command for you ; you must not depart without leave.” And, soon after, they understood that the king’s orders were to obtain leave from the Ras to bring Mr. Bruce, with Engedan, near, and in sight of him.

Engedan went away on a gallop to join the king, and our traveller proceeded after him ; nor did he receive any other message either from the king or the Ras. He returned to Koscam, very little pleased with the reception he had met with. All the town was in a hurry and confusion ; 30,000 men were encamped upon the Kahha ; and the first horrid scene Michael exhibited there, was causing the eyes of twelve of the chiefs of the Galla, whom he had taken prisoners, to be pulled out, and the unfortunate sufferers turned out to the fields, to be devoured at night by the hyænas. Two of these victims Mr. Bruce took under his care ; they both recovered, and from them he learned many particulars both of their country and manners.

On the 10th, the army marched into the town in triumph, and the Ras at the head of the troops of Tigré. He was bareheaded ; over his shoulders, and down to his back, hung a pallium, or cloak, of black velvet, with a silver fringe. A boy, by his right stirrup, held a silver wand about five feet and a half long, much like the staves of our great officers at court. Behind him all the soldiers who had slain an enemy, and taken the spoils from them, had their lances and firelocks ornamented with small shreds of scarlet cloth, one piece for every man he had slain. Remarkable among all this multitude was Hagos, door-keeper of the Ras. This man, always well-armed and well mounted, had followed the wars of the Ras from his infancy, and had been so fortunate in this kind of single combat, that his whole lance and javelin, horse and person, were covered over with the shreds of scarlet cloth. At this last battle of Fagitta Hagos is said to have slain eleven men with his own hand. Indeed there is nothing more fallacious than  
judging

---

Supposed meaning of the Hebrew phrase, "Lift not up the horn."

---

judging of a man's courage by these marks of conquests. A good horseman, armed with a coat of mail, upon a strong, well-fed, well-winded horse, may, after a defeat, kill as many wretched, weary, naked fugitives as he pleases, confining himself to those that are weakly, mounted upon tired horses, and covered only with goat-skins, or that are flying on foot.

One thing remarkable in this cavalcade, was the head-dress of the governors of provinces. A large broad fillet was bound upon their foreheads and tied behind. In the middle of this was a horn, or a conical piece of silver, gilt, about four inches long, much in the shape of our common candle extinguishers. This is called *kirn* or horn, and is only worn in reviews or parades after victory. This, like all other of their usages, Mr. Bruce supposes to be taken from the Hebrews, and the several allusions made in scripture to it arises from this practice:—"I said unto fools, Deal not foolishly; and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn," &c.—Next to these came the king, with a fillet of white muslin about three inches broad, binding his forehead, tied with a large double knot behind, and hanging down about two feet on his back. About him were the great officers of state, such of the young nobility as were without command; and after these, the household troops. Then followed the Kanitz Kitzera, or executioner of the camp, and his attendants; and, last of all, amidst the King's and the Ras's baggage, came a man bearing the stuffed skin of the unfortunate Woosheka upon a pole, which he hung upon a branch of the tree before the king's palace, appropriated for public executions.

Mr. Bruce went every day to see his patients at Koscam; at all which times he was received with the greatest cordiality and marks of kindness by the Iteghé, and orders given for his free admittance upon all occasions like an officer of her household.

About the 14th, Mr. Bruce was informed that his recommendatory letters were to be all read. He expected

pected not to be sent for till the afternoon, and had rode out to Koscam with Ayto Heikel, the queen's chamberlain, to see the child (one of his patients) who was pretty well recovered of all its complaints, but very weak. In the interim he was sent for to the Ras, with orders to dispatch a man with the king's present, to wait for him (Mr. Bruce) at the palace, whither he was to go after leaving Michael. Five in the evening was fixed as the hour. Mr. Bruce came a little before the time, and met Ayto Aylo at the door. He squeezed him by the hand, and said, "Refuse nothing, it can be all altered afterwards; but it is very necessary on account of the priests and the populace, you have a place of some authority, otherwise you will be robbed and murdered the first time you go half a mile from home: fifty people have told me you have chests filled with gold, and that you can make gold, or bring what quantities you please from the Indies; and the reason of all this is, because you refused the queen and Ozoro Esther's offer of gold at Koscam, and which you must never do again."

Our traveller went in and saw the Ras, who was an old man, sitting upon a sofa; his white hair was dressed in many short curls. He appeared to be thoughtful, but not displeased; his face was lean, his eyes quick and vivid, but seemed to be a little sore from exposure to the weather. He seemed to be about six feet high, though his lameness made it difficult to guess with accuracy. His air was perfectly free from constraint, what the French call *degagée*. They must have been bad physiognomists that did not discern his capacity and understanding by his very countenance. Every look conveyed a sentiment with it: he seemed to have no occasion for other language, and indeed he spoke little. Mr. Bruce offered, as usual, to kiss the ground before him; and of his he seemed to take little notice, stretching out his hand, and shaking Mr. Bruce's upon his rising.

Mr. Bruce sat down with Aylo, three or four of the judges,

---

Conversation of the Ras with Mr. Bruce.

---

judges, Heikel the queen's chamberlain, and others, who whispered something in his ear, and went out; which interruption prevented Mr. Bruce from speaking as he was prepared to do, or giving him his present, which a man held behind him. The Ras began gravely, "Yagoube, I think that is your name, hear what I say to you, and mark what I recommend to you. You are a man, I am told, who make it your business to wander in the fields in search after trees and grass in solitary places, and to sit up all night alone looking at the stars of the heavens. Other countries are not like this, though this was never so bad as it is now. These wretches here are enemies to strangers; if they saw you alone in your own parlour, their first thought would be how to murder you; though they knew they were to get nothing by it, they would murder you for mere mischief." "The devil is strong in them," says a voice from a corner of the room, which appeared to be that of a priest. "Therefore, (says the Ras,) after a long conversation with your friend Aylo, whose advice I hear you happily take, as indeed we all do, I have thought that situation best which leaves you at liberty to follow your own designs, at the same time that it puts your person in safety; that you will not be troubled with monks about their religious matters, or in danger from these rascals that may seek to murder you for money."

"What are the monks?" said the same voice from the corner; "the monks will never meddle with such a man as this."—"Therefore the king (continued the Ras, without taking any notice of the interruption,) has appointed you Baalomaal, and to command the Kocob horse, which I thought to have given to Francis, an old soldier of mine; but he is poor, and we will provide for him better; for these appointments have honour, but little profit." "Sir, (said Francis, who was in presence, but behind,) it is in much more honourable hands than either mine or the Armenian's,  
or

---

Mr. Bruce is introduced to the King of Gondar.

---

or any other white man's since the days of Hatze Menas, and so I told the king to-day." "Very well Francis, (says the Ras,) it becomes a soldier to speak the truth, whether it makes for or against himself. Go then to the king and kiss the ground upon your appointment. I see you have already learned this ceremony of our's; Aylo and Heikel are very proper persons to go with you. The king expressed his surprise to me last night he had not seen you; and there too is Tecla Mariam, the king's secretary, who came with your appointment from the palace to-day." The man in the corner, whom Mr. Bruce took for a priest, was this Tecla Mariam a scribe. Mr. Bruce then gave him a present, after which he soon retired.

Mr. Bruce went afterwards to the king's palace, and met Aylo and Heikel at the door of the presence-chamber. Tecla Mariam walked before them to the foot of the throne; after which Mr. Bruce advanced and prostrated himself upon the ground. "I have brought you a servant, (says he to the king,) from so distant a country, that if you ever let him escape, we shall never be able to follow him, or know where to seek him." To this the king made no reply, nor did he shew any alteration of countenance. Five people were standing on each side of the throne, all young men, three on his left, and two on his right. One of these, the son of Tecla Mariam, (afterwards Mr. Bruce's great friend,) who stood uppermost on the left hand, came up; and, taking hold of him by the hand, placed him immediately above him; when, seeing Mr. Bruce had no knife in his girdle, he pulled out his own and gave it to him. Upon being placed, Mr. Bruce again kissed the ground.

The king was in an alcove; the rest went out of sight from where the throne was, and sat down. The usual questions were now put to Mr. Bruce about Jerusalem and the holy places—Where his country was? which it was impossible to describe, as they knew the situation of no country but their own—Why he came



---

---

Mr. Bruce's reception at court.

---

---

so far? Whether the moon and the stars, but especially the moon, was the same in his country as in theirs? and a great many such idle and tiresome questions. He had several times offered to take his present from the man who held it, that he might offer it to his Majesty and go away; but the king always made a sign to put it off, till, being tired to death with standing, he leaned against the wall. Aylo was fast asleep, and Ayto Heikel and the Greeks cursing their master in their hearts for spoiling the good supper that Anthulé his treasurer had prepared for us. This, as he afterwards found out, the king very well knew, and resolved to try his patience to the utmost. At last, Ayto Aylo stole away to bed, and every body else after him, except those who had accompanied our traveller, who were ready to die with thirst, and drop down with weariness. It was agreed by those who were out of sight, to send Tecla Mariam to whisper in the king's ear that Mr. Bruce had not been well, which he did, but no notice was taken of it. It was now past ten o'clock, and he shewed no inclination to go to bed. Mr. Bruce was absolutely in despair, and scarcely able to speak a word, inwardly mourning the hardness of his lot in this first promotion and sincerely praying it might be his last preferment in this court. At last all the Greeks began to be impatient, and got out of the corner of the room behind the alcove, and stood immediately before the throne. The king seemed to be astonished at seeing them, and told them he thought they had all been at home long ago. They said, however, they would not go without our traveller; which the king said could not be, for it was one of the duties of his employment to be charged with the door of his bed-chamber that night.

Mr. Bruce was exceedingly chagrined at this. At last Ayto Heikel, taking courage, came forward to him, pretending a message from the queen, and whispered something in his ear, probably that the Ras

---

Quarrel of Guebra Mascall with Mr. Bruce, in

---

would take it ill. He then laughed, said he thought they had supped, and dismissed them.

Mr. Bruce and his friends retired from court very much disposed to make a hearty supper. In the party was Guebra Mascall, a sister's son of Ras Michael, and commander of 2000 soldiers who carried fire-arms. He was one of the best officers under the Ras, about thirty years of age, of a short square form, and a most unpromising countenance; a flat nose, a wide mouth, a yellow complexion, and hideous scars of the small-pox. This hero was unsufferably vain and presumptuous; and boasted that to him his uncle owed all his victories. While they sat at supper, Guebra Mascall was provoked by Petros to utter some contemptuous language concerning Mr. Bruce's skill in shooting. Mr. Bruce retorted: and told him, that in his gun the end of a tallow-candle would do greater execution than an iron ball in the best of Guebra Mascall's, with all his boasted skill. The Abyssinian called him a liar, and a Frank; and, upon his rising, immediately gave him a kick with his foot. Mr. Bruce, in a transport of rage, seized him by the throat, and threw him on the ground. He drew his knife; and, attempting our traveller, gave him a slight cut near the crown of his head. Hitherto Mr. Bruce had not struck him; he now wrested the knife from him and struck him on the face so violently with the handle, as to mark him with scars which continued discernible even amid the deep pitting of the small-pox. All was now confusion and uproar in the house. An adventure of so serious a nature overcame the effects of the wine upon our countryman. He wrapped himself in his cloak, returned home, and went to bed. His friends were eager to revenge the insult which he had received; and the first news he heard in the morning were that Guebra Mascall was in irons at the house of the Ras. Mr. Bruce, though still angry, was at a loss what measures to take. The Ras would prob-

8

bly

---

consequence of which the court is displeas'd with the latter.

---

bly hear his complaints: but his adversary was formidable. Instead, therefore, of demanding justice, Mr. Bruce excused and palliated the conduct of Guebra Mascall to Ozoro Esther and Ras Michael, obtained his liberty, and listened readily to the intercessor, whom that insolent soldier now sent, in great humiliation, to ask his forgiveness.

A wedding next followed, at the court of Abyssinia, between a grand-daughter of Ras Michael's and a nobleman of the name of Powussen. This marriage was celebrated with riotous feasting. Mr. Bruce used to dine every day with Michael, and was forced to drink such quantities of mead as always gave him a head-ach. The afternoon was then spent with the ladies, and in such riot and debauchery, that our traveller declares it impossible to convey to a reader any idea of the scenes that passed in terms of common decency.

Mr. Bruce was sensible that the cause of his quarrel with Guebra Mascall was not immediately forgotten at court. The king, one day, asked him, whether he was not drunk himself, as well as his opponent, when that quarrel rose. Mr. Bruce replied, that he was perfectly sober; for their entertainer's red wine was finished; and he never willingly drank hydromel. His majesty, with a degree of keenness, returned: "Did you then soberly say to Guebra Mascall, that an end of a tallow candle in a gun in your hand would do more execution than an iron bullet in his?" "Certainly Sir, I said so!" "And why?" "Because it was truth." "With a tallow-candle you can kill a man or a horse?" "Pardon me, Sir; your Majesty is now in place of my sovereign, it would be great presumption in me to argue with you, or urge a conversation against an opinion in which you are already fixed." The king's kindness and curiosity, and Mr. Bruce's desire to vindicate himself, carried matters, at length, so far, that an experiment with a tallow-candle was proposed. Three courtiers

2 F 2

brought

---

---

Amicable termination of the dispute.

---

---

brought each a shield; Mr. Bruce charged his gun with a piece of tallow-candle, and pierced through three at once, to the astonishment, and even the confusion, of the Abyssinian Monarch and his courtiers. A sycamore table was next aimed at, and as easily perforated as the shields. These feats the simple Abyssinians attributed to the power of magic; but they made a strong impression on the mind of the monarch in favour of our traveller.

---

---

### CHAPTER IV.

---

---

Division of Abyssinia—Manners and Customs of the Inhabitants.

---

**A**T Masuah, on the coast of the Red Sea, begins an imaginary division of Abyssinia into two, which is rather a division of language than strictly to be understood as territorial. The first division is called Tigré, between the Red Sea and the river Tacazzé. Between that river and the Nile, westward, where it bounds the Galla, it is called Amhara. But whatever convenience there may be from this division, there is neither geographical nor historical precision in it, for there are many little provinces included in the first that do not belong to Tigré; and, in the second division, or Amhara, that which gives the name is but a very small part of it.

Masuah, in ancient times, was one of the principal places of residence of the Baharnagash, who, when he was not there himself, constantly left his deputy or lieutenant. In summer, he resided for several months in the island of Dahalac, then accounted part of his territory. He was, after the King and Betwudet, the person of the greatest consideration in the kingdom, and was invested with *sendic* and *negareet*, the kettle-drum and colours, marks of supreme command.

Tigré is the next province of Abyssinia, as well for greatness as riches, power, and dignity, and nearest Masuah. It is bounded by the territory of the Baharnagash, that is, by the river Mareb on the east, and the Tacassé upon the west. It is about one hundred  
and

---

Account of the provinces of Begemder,

---

and twenty miles broad from E. to W. and two hundred from N. to S. This is its present situation. The hand of usurping power has abolished all distinctions on the west side of the Tacazzé; besides, many large governments, such as Enderta and Antalow, and great part of the Baharnagash, were swallowed up in this province to the east. What, in a special manner, makes the riches of Tigré, is, that it lies nearest the market, which is Arabia; and all the merchandize destined to cross the Red Sea must pass through this province; so that the governor has the choice of all commodities wherewith to make his market. The strongest male, the most beautiful female slave, the purest gold, the largest teeth of ivory, all must pass through his hands. Fire-arms, moreover, which for many years have decided who is the most powerful in Abyssinia, all these come from Arabia, and not one can be purchased without his knowing to whom it goes, and after his having had the first refusal of it.

Siré, a province about twenty-five miles broad, and not much more in length, is reckoned as part of Tigré also; but this is not a new usurpation. It lost the rank of a province, and was united to Tigré for the misbehaviour of its governor Kasmati Claudius, in an expedition against the Shangalla, in the reign of Yasous the Great.

After passing the Tacazzé, the boundary between Siré and Samen, we come to that mountainous province called by the last name. A large chain of rugged mountains, where is the Jews' Rock, reaches from the south of Tigré drawn near to Waldubba, the low hot country, that bounds Abyssinia on the north.

On the N. E. of Tigré lies the province of Begemder. It borders upon Angot, whose governor is called Angot Ras; but the whole province now, excepting a few villages, is conquered by the Galla. It has Amhara, which runs parallel to it, on the south, and is separated from it by the river Bashilo. Both these  
provinces

---

---

Amhara, Lasta, Walaka, and Gojam.

---

---

provinces are bounded by the river Nile on the west. Begemder is about 180 miles in its greatest length, and 60 in breadth, comprehending Lasta, a mountainous province, sometimes depending on Begemder, but often in rebellion.

Begemder is the strength of Abyssinia in horsemen. It is said, that, with Lasta, it can bring out 45,000 men; but this, as far as ever Mr. Bruce could inform himself, is a great exaggeration. They are exceeding good soldiers when they are pleased with their general, and the cause for which they fight; otherwise, they are easily divided, a great many private interests being continually kept alive, as it is thought industriously, by government itself. It is well stocked with cattle of every kind, all very beautiful. The mountains are full of iron-mines; they are not so steep and rocky, nor so frequent, as in other provinces, if we except only Lasta, and abound in all sort of wild-fowl and game.

Amhara is the next province, between the two rivers Bashilo and Geshen. The length of this country from E. to W. is about 120 miles, and its breadth something more than 40. It is a very mountainous country, full of nobility; the men are reckoned the handsomest in Abyssinia, as well as the bravest.

Between the two rivers Geshen and Samba is a low, unwholesome, though fertile province, called Walaka; and southward of that is Upper Shoa. This province, or kingdom, was famous for the retreat it gave to the only remaining prince of the house of Solomon, who fled from the massacre of his brethren by Judith, about the year 900, upon the rock of Damo. Here the royal family remained in security, and increased in number, for near 400 years, till they were restored.

Gojam, from north-east to south-east, is about 80 miles in length and 40 in breadth. It is a very flat country, and all in pasture; has few mountains, but these are very high ones, and are chiefly on the banks  
of

of the Nile, to the south, which river surrounds the province.

On the south-east of the kingdom of Gojam is Damot. It is bounded by the Temci on the east, by the Gult on the west, by the Nile on the south, and by the high mountains of Amid Amid on the north. It is about 40 miles in length from north to south, and something more than 20 in breadth from east to west.

On the other side of Amid Amid is the province of Agows, bounded by those mountains on the east; by Bure and Umbarma, and the country of the Gongas, on the west; by Damot and Gafat upon the south, and Dingleber on the north.

South from Dembea in Kuara, a very mountainous province confining upon the Pagan blacks, or Shangalla, called Gongas and Guba, the Macrobi of the ancients. It is a very unwholesome province, but abounding in gold, not of its own produce, but that of its neighbourhood, these Pagans—Guba, Nuba, and Shangalla.

Nara, and Ras el Feel, Tchelga, and on to Tcherkin, is a frontier wholly inhabited by Mahometans. Its government is generally given to a stranger, often to a Mahometan; but one of that faith is always deputy-governor. The use of keeping troops here is to defend the friendly Arabs and Shepherds, who remain in their allegiance to Abyssinia, from the resentment of the Arabs of Senmaar, their neighbours; and, by means of these friendly Arabs and Shepherds, secure constant supply of horses for the king's troops. It is a barren stripe of a very hot unwholesome country, full of thick woods, and fit only for hunting. The inhabitants, fugitives from all nations, are chiefly Mahometans, but very bold and expert horsemen, using no other weapon but the broad sword, with which they attack the elephants and rhinoceros. There are many other small provinces, which occasionally are annexed, and sometimes are separated.

The



---

Source of the evils prevalent in Abyssinia.

---

The crown of Abyssinia is hereditary, and has always been so, in one particular family, supposed to be that of Solomon by the Queen of Saba, Negasta Azab, or queen of the south. It is nevertheless elective in this line; and there is no law of the land, nor custom, which gives the eldest son an exclusive title to succeed to his father. The practice has, indeed, been quite the contrary. When, at the death of a king, his sons are old enough to govern, and, by some accident, not yet sent prisoners to the mountain, then the eldest, or he that is next, and not confined, generally takes possession of the throne by the strength of his father's friends; but if no heir is then in the low country, the choice of a king is always according to the will of the minister, which passes for that of the people; and his inclination and interest being to govern, he never fails to choose an infant, whom he afterwards directs, ruling the kingdom absolutely during the minority, which generally exhausts, or is equal to the term of his life.

From this flow all the misfortunes of this unhappy country. This very defect arises from a desire to institute a more than ordinary perfect form of government; for the Abyssinians' first position was, "Woe be to the kingdom whose king is a child;" and this they know must often happen when succession is left to the course of nature. But when there was a choice to be made out of two hundred persons, all of the same family, all capable of reigning, it was their own fault, they thought, if they had not always a prince of proper age and qualifications to rule the kingdom, according to the necessities of the times, and to preserve the succession of the family in the house of Solomon, agreeable to the laws of the land; but this mode of reasoning experience has proved fallacious.

The king is anointed with plain oil of olives, which, being poured upon the crown of the head, he rubs it into his long hair indecently enough with

both his hands, pretty much as his soldiers do with theirs when they get access to plenty of butter.

The crown is made in the shape of a priest's mitre, or head-piece; it is a kind of helmet covering the king's forehead, cheeks, and neck. It is lined with blue taffety: the outside is half gold and half silver, of the most beautiful filligrane work. The king goes to church regularly, his guards taking possession of every avenue and door through which he is to pass; and nobody is allowed to enter with him, because he is then on foot, excepting two officers of his bed-chamber, who support him.

He kisses the threshold and side-posts of the church-door, the steps before the altar, and then returns home: sometimes there is service in the church, sometimes there is not; but he takes no notice of the difference. He rides up stairs into the presence-chamber on a mule, and lights immediately on the carpet before his throne; and Mr. Bruce has sometimes seen great indecencies committed by the said mule in the presence-chamber, upon a Persian carpet.

The Serach Massery, an officer so called, with a long whip, begins cracking and making a noise, worse than twenty French postillions, at the door of the palace before the dawn of day. This chases away the hyæna and other wild beasts; this, too, is the signal for the king's rising, who sits in judgment every morning fasting, and, after that, about eight o'clock, he goes to breakfast.

There are six noblemen of the king's own choosing, who are called Baalomaal, or gentlemen of his bed-chamber; four of these are always with him. There is a seventh, who is the chief of these called Azeleffa el Camisha, groom of the robe or stole. He is keeper of the king's wardrobe, and the first officer of the bed-chamber. These officers, the black slaves, and some others, serve him as menial servants, and are in a degree of familiarity with him unknown to the rest of the subjects.

When

When the king sits to consult upon civil matters of consequence, he is shut up in a kind of box opposite to the head of the council table. The persons that deliberate sit at the table; and, according to their rank, give their voices, the youngest or lowest officer always speaking first. The first that give their votes are the Shalaka, or colonels of the household-troops. The second are the great butlers, men that have the charge of the king's drink. The third is the Badje-rund, or keeper of that apartment in the palace called the *lion's house*; and after these the keeper of the banqueting-house. The next is called Lika Magwass, an officer that always goes before the king to hinder the pressure of the crowd. In war, when the king is marching, he rides constantly round him at a certain distance, and carries his shield and his lance; at least he carries a silver shield, and a lance pointed with the same metal, before such kings as do not choose to expose their persons. No prince ever lost his life in battle till the coming of the Europeans into Abyssinia, when both the excommunicating and murdering of their sovereigns seem to have been introduced at the same time. After the Lika Magwass comes the Palambaras; after him the Fit-Auraris; then the Gera Kasmati, and the Kanya Kasmati, their names being derived from their rank or order in encamping, the one on the right, the other on the left, of the king's tent; Kanya and Gera signifying *the right*, and *the left*; after them the Dakakin Billetana Gueta, or the under-chamberlain; then the secretary for the king's commands: after him the right and left Azāges, or generals; after them Rak Massery; after him the Basha; after him Kasmati of Damot, then of Samen, then Amhara, and last of all, Tigré; before whom stands a golden cup upon a cushion, and he is called Nebrit, as being Governor of Axum, or keeper of the book of the law supposed to be there. After the Governor of Tigré comes the Acab Saat, or guardian of the fire, and he chief ecclesiastical officer of the king's house-

hold. Some have said, that this officer was appointed to attend the king at the time of eating, and that it was his province to order both meat and drink to be withdrawn whenever he saw the king inclined to excess.

After the Acab Saat, comes the first master of the household ; then the Betwudet, or Ras ; last of all the king gives his sentence, which is final, and sends it to the table, from the balcony where he is then sitting, by the officer Kall Hatze.

We meet in Abyssinia with various usages, which many have hitherto thought to be peculiar to those ancient nations in which they were first observed ; others, not so learned, have thought they originated in Abyssinia. Mr. Bruce first takes notice of those that regard the king and court.

The kings of Persia, like these we are speaking of, were eligible in one family only, that of the Arsacidæ, and it was not till that race failed they chose Darius. The title of the King of Abyssinia is, *King of Kings* ; and such Daniel tells us was that of Nebuchadnezzar. The right of primogeniture does not so prevail in Abyssinia as to exclude election in the person of the younger brothers ; and this was likewise the case in Persia. In Persia a preference was understood to be due to the king's lawful children ; but there were instances of the natural child being preferred to the lawful one. Darius, though a bastard, was preferred to Isogius, Xerxes's lawful son, and that merely by the election of the people. The same has always obtained in Abyssinia. A very great part of their kings are adulterous bastards, others are the issue of concubines ; but they have been preferred to the crown, by the influence of a party, always under the name of the Voice of the People.

Though the Persian kings had various palaces, to which they removed at different times in the year, Pasagarda, the metropolis of their ancient kings, was observed as the only place for their coronation ;  
and

---

monarchy of Abyssinia similar in various respects.

---

and this, too, was the case of Abyssinia, with their metropolis of Axum.

The next remarkable ceremony in which these two nations agreed, is that of adoration, inviolably observed in Abyssinia to this day, as often as you enter the sovereign's presence. This is not only kneeling, but an absolute prostration. You first fall upon your knees, then upon the palms of your hands, then incline your head and body till your forehead touch the earth; and, in case you have an answer to expect, you lie in that posture till the king, or somebody from him, desires you to rise. This, too, was the custom of Persia; Arian says this was first instituted by Cyrus, and this was precisely the posture in which they adored God; mentioned in the book of Exodus.

It is the constant practice in Abyssinia to beset the king's doors and windows within his hearing, and there, from early morning to night, to cry for justice as loud as possible in a distressed and complaining tone, and in all the different languages they are masters of, in order to their being admitted to have their supposed grievances heard. In a country so ill governed as Abyssinia is, and so perpetually involved in war, it may be easily supposed there is no want of people, who have real injuries and violence to complain of: but if it were not so, this is so much the constant usage, that when it happens (as in the midst of the rainy season) that few people can approach the capital, or stand without in such bad weather, a set of vagrants are provided, maintained, and paid, whose sole business it is to cry and lament, as if they had been really very much injured and oppressed; and this, they tell you, is for the king's honour, that he may not be lonely, by the palace being too quiet. This, of all their absurd customs was the most grievous and troublesome to Mr. Bruce. Sometimes, while Mr. Bruce was busy in his room in the rainy season, there would be four or five hundred people, who all at once would begin, some roaring and crying, as if they

---

Further striking resemblances of the present Abyssinian

---

they were in pain, others demanding justice, as if they were that moment suffering, or if in the instant to be put to death; and some groaning and sobbing as if just expiring; and this horrid symphony was so artfully performed, that no ear could distinguish but that it proceeded from real distress. Mr. Bruce was often so surprised, as to send the soldiers at the door to bring in one of them, thinking him come from the country, to examine who had injured him: many a time he, was a servant of his own, or some other equally known; or, if he was a stranger, upon asking him what misfortune had befallen him, he would answer very composedly, Nothing was the matter with him: that he had been sleeping all day with the horses: that hearing from the soldiers at the door that he, Mr. Bruce, was retired to his apartment, he and his companions had come to cry and make a noise under his window, to do him *honour* before the people, for fear he should be melancholy, by being too quiet when alone; and therefore hoped that he would order them drink, that they might continue with a little more spirit. The violent anger which this often put him into did not fail to be punctually reported to the king, at which he would laugh heartily; and he himself was often hid, not far off, for the sake of being a spectator of his heavy displeasure. These complaints whether real or feigned, have always for their burden, *Rete O Jan hoi*, which, repeated quick, very much resembles Prete Janni, the name that was given to this prince, of which we never yet knew the derivation; its signification is, "Do me justice, O my king!"

Xerxes, being about to declare war against the Greeks, assembled all the principal chiefs of Asia in council. "That I may not," says he, "be *thought to act* only by my own judgment, I have called you together. At the same time, I think proper to intimate to you, that it is your duty to obey my will, rather than enter into any deliberation or remonstrances of your own."

We

---

monarchy to the ancient dynasty of the Persians.

---

We will now compare some particulars ; the dress and ornaments of the two kings. The King of Abyssinia wears his hair long ; so did the ancient Kings of Persia. A comet had appeared in the war with Persia, and was looked upon by the Romans as a bad omen. Vespasian laughed at it ; and said, If it portended any ill, it was to the King of Persia, because, *like him*, it wore long hair.

The diadem was, with the Persians, a mark of royalty, as with the Abyssinians, being composed of the same materials, and worn in the same manner. The king of Abyssinia wears it while marching, as a mark of sovereignty, that does not impede or incommode him, as any other heavier ornament would do, especially in hot weather. This fillet surrounds his head above the hair, leaving the crown perfectly uncovered. It is an offence of the first magnitude for any person, at this time, to wear any thing upon his head, especially white, unless for Mahometans, who wear caps, and over them a large white turban ; or for priests, who wear large turbans of muslin also. This was the diadem of the Persians, as appears from Lucian, who calls it a white fillet about the forehead. The Kings of Abyssinia anciently sat upon a gold throne, which is a large, convenient, oblong square, seat, like a small bedstead, covered with Persian carpets, damask, and cloth of gold with steps leading up to it. It is still richly gilded : but the many revolutions and wars have much abridged their ancient magnificence. It is, in Abyssinia, high-treason, to sit upon any seat of the king's ; and he that presumed to do this would be instantly hewn to pieces, if there was not some other collateral proof of his being a madman.

It is probable that Alexander had heard of this law in Persia, and disapproved of it ; for one day, it being extremely cold, the king sitting in his chair before, warming his legs, saw a soldier probably a Persian, who had lost his feeling by extreme numbness. The king immediately leaped from his chair, and ordered the soldier to be set down upon it. The fire

---

Other respects in which these two powers are similar.

---

soon brought him to his senses, but he had almost lost them again with fear, by finding himself in the king's seat. To whom Alexander said, "Remember, and distinguish, how much more advantageous to man my government is, than that of the Kings of Persia. By sitting down on my seat you have saved your life: by sitting on theirs, you would infallibly have lost it."

In Abyssinia it is considered as a fundamental law of the land, that none of the royal family, who has any deformity or bodily defect, shall be allowed to succeed to the crown; and, for this purpose, any of the princes, who may have escaped from the mountain of Wechne, and who are afterwards taken, are mutilated in some of their members, that thus they may be disqualified from ever succeeding. In Persia the same was observed. Procopius tells us, that Zames, the son of Cabades, was excluded from the throne because he was blind of one eye; the law of Persia prohibiting any person that had a bodily defect to be elected king.

The Kings of Abyssinia were seldom seen by the people. This absurd usage gave rise to many abuses. In Persia it produced two officers, who were called the king's eyes, and the king's ear, and who had the dangerous (Mr. Bruce means dangerous for the subject) of seeing and hearing for their sovereign. In Abyssinia it created an officer called the king's mouth, or voice; for, being seen by nobody, he spoke of course in the third person, *Hear what the king says to you*, which is the usual form of all regal mandates in Abyssinia, and what follows has the force of law.

Solemn hunting-matches were always in use both with the Kings of Abyssinia and those of Persia. In both kingdoms it was a crime for a subject to strike the game till such time as the king had thrown his lance at it. This absurd custom was repealed by Artaxerxes Longimanus in one kingdom, and by Yasous the Great in the other, so late as the beginning of the last century.

The Kings of Abyssinia are above all laws. They  
are



---

Other respects in which these two powers are similar.

---

are supreme in all causes ecclesiastical and civil: the land and persons of their subjects are equally their property, and every inhabitant of their kingdom is born their slave; if he bears a higher rank it is by the king's gift; for his nearest relations are accounted nothing better. The same obtained in Persia.

There are several kinds of bread in Abyssinia, some of different sorts of teff, and some of tocuſſio, which also vary in quality. The King of Abyssinia eats of wheat bread, though not of every wheat, but of that only that grows in the province of Dembea, therefore called the king's food. It always has been, and still is, the custom of the Kings of Abyssinia, to marry what number of wives they choose; that these were not, therefore, all queens; but that among them there was one who was considered particularly as queen, and upon her head was placed the crown; and she was called Iteghé. Thus, in Persia, we read that Ahasuerus loved Esther, who had found grace in his sight more than the other virgins, and he had placed a golden crown upon her head. And Josephus informs us, that when Esther was brought before the king, he was exceedingly delighted with her, and made her his lawful wife, and when she came into the palace he put a crown upon her head: whether placing the crown upon the queen's head had any civil effect as to regency in Persia, as it had in Abyssinia, is what history does not inform us.

The king of Abyssinia never is seen to walk, nor to set his foot upon the ground, out of his palace; and when he would dismount from the horse or mule on which he rides, he has a servant with a stool, who places it properly for him for that purpose. He rides into the anti-chamber to the foot of the throne, or to the stool placed in the alcove of his tent. He very often judges capital crimes himself. No man is condemned by the king in person to die for the first fault, unless the crime be of a horrid nature, such as parricide or sacrilege. And, in general, the life and

---

 Enumeration of various other striking
 

---

merits of the prisoner are weighed against his immediate guilt ; so that if his first behaviour has had more merit towards the state than his present delinquency has thought to have injured it, the one is placed fairly against the other, and the accused is generally absolved when the sovereign judges alone. Darius had condemned Sandeces, one of the king's judges, to be crucified for corruption, that is, for having giving false judgment for a bribe. The man was already hung up on the cross, when the king, considering with himself how many good services he had done, previous to this, the only offence which he had committed, ordered him to be pardoned.

The Persian king, in all expeditions, was attended by judges. We find in Herodotus, that, in the expedition of Cambyses, ten of the principal Egyptians were condemned to die by these judges for every Persian that had been slain by the people of Memphis. Six judges always attended the king of Abyssinia to the camp, and, before them, rebels taken on the field are tried and punished on the spot. People that the king distinguished by favour, or for any public action, were in both kingdoms presented with gold chains, swords, and bracelets. These, in Abyssinia, are understood to be chiefly rewards of military service ; yet Poncet received a gold chain from Yasous the Great. The day before the battle of Serbraxos, Ayton Engedan received a silver bridle and saddle, covered with silver plates, from Ras Michael.

In Abyssinia, when a prisoner is condemned in capital cases, he is not again remitted to prison, which is thought cruel ; but he is immediately carried away, and the sentence executed upon him. Abba Salama, the Acab Saat, was condemned by the king the morning he entered Gondar, on his return from Tigré, and immediately hanged, in the garment of a priest, on a tree at the door of the king's palace. Chremation, brother to the usurper Socinios, was executed that same morning ; Guebra Denghel, Ras Michael's son-

---

resemblances between these two powers.

---

in-law, was likewise executed that same day, immediately after judgment ; and so were several others. The same was the practise in Persia, as we learn from Xenophon, and more plainly from Diodorus.

The capital punishment, in Abyssinia, is the cross. Socinius first ordered Arzo, his competitor, who had fled for assistance and refuge to Phineas king of the Falasha, to be crucified without the camp. We find the same punishment inflicted by Artaxerxes upon Haman, who was ordered to be affixed to the cross till he died.

The next capital punishment is flaying alive. That this barbarous execution still prevails in Abyssinia is proved by the fate of the unfortunate Woosheka, taken prisoner in the campaign in 1769, while Mr. Bruce was in Abyssinia ; a sacrifice made to the vengeance of the beautiful Ozoro Esther, who, kind and humane as she was in other respects, could receive no atonement for the death of her husband.

Lapidation, or stoning to death, is the next capital punishment in Abyssinia. This is chiefly inflicted upon strangers called Franks, for religious causes. The catholic priests in Abyssinia that have been detected there; in these latter days, have been stoned to death, and their bodies lie still in the streets of Gondar, in squares or waste places, covered with the heaps of stones which occasioned their death by being thrown at them. There are three of these heaps at the church of Abbo, all covering Franciscan friars ; and, besides them, a small pyramid over a body who was stoned to death with them, about the first year of the reign of David IV. In Persia we find, that Pagorasus (according to Ctesias) was stoned to death by order of the king ; and the same author says, that Pharnacyas, one of the murderers of Xerxes, was stoned to death likewise.

Among capital punishments may be reckoned likewise the plucking out of the eyes, a cruelty which Mr. Bruce had but too often seen committed in the

---

Skins made use of by the Abyssinians instead of paper.

---

short stay be made in Abyssinia. This is generally inflicted upon rebels. After the slaughter of the battle of Fagitta twelve chiefs of the Pagan Galla, taken prisoners by Ras Michael, had their eyes torn out, and were afterwards abandoned to starve in the valleys below the town. Several prisoners of another rank, noblemen of Tigré, underwent the same misfortune; and what is wonderful, not one of them died in the operation, nor its consequences, though performed in the coarsest manner, with an iron forceps, or pincers.

The dead bodies of criminals slain for treason, murder, and violence, on the high-way, at certain times, are seldom buried in Abyssinia. The streets of Gondar are strewed with pieces of their carcasses, which bring the wild beasts in multitudes into the city as soon as it becomes dark, so that it is scarcely safe for any one to walk in the night. The dogs used to bring pieces of human bodies into Mr. Bruce's house, and court-yard, to eat them in greater security.

Notwithstanding the Abyssinians were so anciently and nearly connected with Egypt, they never seem to have made use of paper, or papyrus, but imitated the practice of the Persians, who wrote upon skins; and they do so to this day. This arises from their having early been Jews. In Parthia, likewise, Pliny informs us, the use of papyrus was absolutely unknown; and though it was discovered that papyrus grew in the Euphrates, near Babylon, of which they could make paper, they obstinately rather choose to adhere to their ancient custom of weaving their letters on cloth, of which they made their garments. The Persians, moreover, made use of parchment for their records, to which all their remarkable transactions were trusted; and to this it is probably owing we have so many of their customs preserved to this day.

From this great resemblance in customs between the Persians and Abyssinians, following the fashionable

---

The cow an object of adoration among the ancient Egyptians.

---

able way of judging about the origin of nations, one should boldly conclude, that the Abyssinians were a colony of Persians; but this is very well known to be without foundation. The customs, mentioned as only peculiar to Persia, were common to all the east; and they were lost when those countries were overrun and conquered by people who introduced barbarous customs of their own. The reason why we have so much left of the Persian customs is, that they were written, and so not liable to alteration; and their being on parchment also contributed to their preservation. The history which treats of those ancient and polished nations has preserved few fragments of their manners entire from the ruins of time; while Abyssinia, at war with nobody, or at war with itself only, has preserved the ancient customs which it enjoyed in common with all the east, and which were only lost in other kingdoms by the invasion of strangers, a misfortune Abyssinia has never suffered since the introduction of letters.

The old Egyptians, as we are told by sacred scripture, did not eat with strangers; but perhaps the observation is extended farther than ever scripture meant. The instance given of Joseph's brethren not being allowed to eat with the Egyptians was, because Joseph had told Pharaoh that his brethren, and Jacob his father, were shepherds, that he might obtain from the Egyptians the land of Goshen, a land, as the name imports, of pasturage and grass, which the Nile never overflowed, and it was therefore in possession of the shepherds. Now the shepherds, we are told, were the direct natural enemies of the Egyptians who live in towns. The shepherds also sacrificed the god whom the Egyptians worshipped.

The Egyptians worshipped the cow, and the shepherds lived upon her flesh, which made them a separate people, that could not eat nor communicate together; and the very knowledge of this was, as we are informed by scripture, the reason why Joseph told Pharaoh,

---

The ancient Egyptians in some cases similar

---

Pharaoh, when he asked him what profession his brethren were of, "Your servants (says Joseph) are shepherds, and their employment the feeding of cattle;" and this was given out, that the land of Goshen might be allotted to them, and so they and their descendants be kept separate from the Egyptians, and not exposed to mingle in their abominations; or, though they had abstained from those abominations, they could not kill cattle for sacrifice or for food. They would have raised ill-will against themselves; and, as Moses says, would have stoned, and so the end of bringing them to Goshen would have been frustrated, which was to nurse them in a plentiful land in peace and security, till they should attain to be a mighty people, capable of subduing and filling the land, to which, at the end of their captivity, God was to lead them.

The Abyssinians neither eat nor drink with strangers, though they have no reason for this; and it is now a mere prejudice, because the old occasion for this regulation is lost. They break, or purify, however, every vessel a stranger of any kind shall have eaten or drunk of. The custom then is copied from the Egyptians; and they have preserved it, though the Egyptian reason does no longer hold.

The Egyptians made no account of the mother what her state was; if the father was free, the child followed the condition of the father. This is strictly so in Abyssinia. The king's child by a negro-slave, bought with money, or taken in war, is as near in succeeding to the crown, as any one of twenty children that he has older than that one, and born of the noblest women of the country.

The men in Egypt neither bought nor sold; the same is the case in Abyssinia at this day. It is infamy for a man to go to market to buy any thing. He cannot carry water or bake bread; but he must wash the cloaths belonging to both sexes; and, in this function, the women cannot help him. In Abyssinia the  
men

---

---

to the modern Abyssinians.

---

---

men carried their burdens on their heads, the women on their shoulders; and this difference, we are told, obtained in Egypt. It is plain, that this buying, in the public market, by women must have ended whenever jealousy or sequestration of that sex began. For this reason it ended early in Egypt; but, for the opposite reason, it subsists in Abyssinia to this day. It was a sort of impiety in Egypt to eat a calf; and the reason was plain, they worshipped the cow. In Abyssinia, to this day, no man eats veal, although every one very willingly eats a cow. The Egyptian reason no longer subsists, as in the former case, but the prejudice remains, though they have forgotten their reason.

The Abyssinians eat no wild or water-fowl, not even the goose, which was a great delicacy in Egypt. The reason of this is, that, upon their conversion to Judaism, they were forced to relinquish their ancient municipal customs, as far as they were contrary to the Mosaical law; and the animals, in their country, not corresponding in form, kind, or name, with those mentioned in the Septuagint, or original Hebrew, it has followed, that there are many of each class that know not whether they are clean or not; and a wonderful confusion and uncertainty has followed through ignorance or mistake, being unwilling to violate the law in any one instance, though not understanding it.

It must be from prejudice alone we condemn the eating of raw flesh; no precept, divine or human, forbids it; and if it be true, as later travellers have discovered, that there are nations ignorant of the use of fire, any law against eating raw flesh could never have been intended by God as obligatory upon mankind in general. At any rate, it is certainly not clearly known, whether the eating raw flesh was not an earlier and more general practice than by preparing it with fire; many wise and learned men have doubted, whether it was at first permitted to  
man

man to eat animal food at all. God, the author of life, and the best judge of what was proper to maintain it, gave this regimen to our first parents—"Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed: to you it shall be for meat." And though, immediately after, he mentions both beasts and fowls, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth, he does not say that he has designed any of these as meat for man. On the contrary, he seems to have intended the vegetable creation as food for both man and beast—"And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein *there is life*, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so." After the flood, when mankind began to repossess the earth, God gave Noah a much more extensive permission:—"Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you, all things."

Saul's army, after a battle, *slew*, that is, fell voraciously upon the cattle they had taken, and threw them upon the ground to cut off their flesh, and eat them raw, so that the army was defiled by eating blood, or living animals. To prevent this, Saul caused to be rolled to him a great stone, and ordered those that killed their oxen to cut their throats upon that stone. This was the only lawful way of killing animals for food; the tying of the ox and throwing it upon the ground was not permitted as equivalent. The Israelites did probably in that case, as the Abyssinians do at this day; they cut a part of its throat, so that blood might be seen upon the ground, but nothing mortal to the animal followed from that wound. But, after laying his head upon a large stone, and cutting his throat, the blood fell from on high, or was poured on the ground like water, and sufficient evidence appeared that the creature was  
dead;







*Illustration of the scene*

## The Polyphemus banquet.

dead, before it was attempted to eat it. The Abyssinians came from Palestine a very few years after this ; and there is no doubt, that they then carried with them this, with many other Jewish customs, which they have continued to this day.

Consistent with the plan of his work, which is to describe the manners of the several nations through which Mr. Bruce passed, good and bad, as he observed them, he says, he cannot avoid giving some account of this Polyphemus banquet, as far as decency will permit him : it is part of the history of a barbarous people ; and, however he might wish it, he cannot decline the task.

In the capital, where one is safe from surprise at all times, or in the country or villages, when the rains have become so constant that the valleys will not bear a horse to pass them, or that men cannot venture far from home, through fear of being surrounded and swept away by temporary torrents, occasioned by sudden showers on the mountains ; in a word, when a man can say he is safe at home, and the spear and shield is hung up in the hall, a number of people of the best fashion in the villages, of both sexes, courtiers in the palace, or citizens in the town, meet together to dine between twelve and one o'clock. A long table is set in the middle of a large room, and benches beside it for a number of guests who are invited. Tables and benches the Portuguese introduced amongst them ; but bull hides, spread upon the ground, served them before, as they now do in the camp and country. A cow or bull, one or more, as the company is numerous, is brought close to the door, and his feet strongly tied. The dewlap is cut only so deep as to arrive at the fat, of which it totally consists ; and, by the separation of a few small blood-vessels, six or seven drops of blood only fall upon the ground. They have no stone, bench, or altar, upon which the cruel assassin lays the animal's head in this operation. Mr. Bruce begs pardon indeed for

11. 21 calling

---

---

The Polyphemus Banquet.

---

---

calling this butcher an assassin, as he is not so merciful as to aim at the life, but, on the contrary, to keep the beast alive till he be nearly eaten up. Having satisfied the Mosaical law, according to his conception, by pouring these six or seven drops upon the ground, two or more of them fall to work; on the back of the beast, and on each side of the spine, they cut skin deep; then putting their fingers between the flesh and the skin, they begin to strip the hide of the animal half way down his ribs, and so on to the buttock, cutting the skin wherever it hinders them commodiously to strip the poor animal bare. All the flesh on the buttocks is then cut off, and in solid square pieces, without bones, or much effusion of blood; and the prodigious noise the animal makes is a signal for the company to sit down to table. There are then laid before every guest, instead of plates, round cakes, if they may be so called, about twice as large as a pan-cake, and something thicker and tougher. It is unleavened bread of a sourish taste, far from being disagreeable, and very easily digested, made of a grain called teff. It is of different colours, from black to the colour of the whitest wheat-bread. Three or four of these cakes are generally put uppermost, for the food of the person opposite to whose seat they are placed. Beneath these are four or five of ordinary bread, and of a blackish kind. These serve the master to wipe his fingers upon, and afterwards the servant for bread to his dinner. Two or three servants then come each with a square piece of beef in his bare hands, laying it upon the cakes of teff, placed like dishes down the table, without cloth or any thing else beneath them. By this time all the guests have taken up their knives, and their men have the large crooked ones, which they put to all sorts of uses during the time of war. The women have small clasped knives, such as the worst of the kind made at Birmingham, sold for a penny each. The company are so ranged, that one man sits be-

## The Polyphemus banquet.

tween two women ; the man with his long knife cuts a thin piece, which would be thought a good beef-steak in England, while you see the motion of the fibres yet perfectly distinct, and alive in the flesh. No man in Abyssinia, of any fashion whatever, feeds himself, or touches his own meat. The women take the steak, and cut it lengthways like strings, about the thickness of a little finger, then cross-ways into square pieces, something smaller than dice. This they lay upon a piece of the teff bread, strongly powdered with black pepper, or Cayenne pepper, and fossile salt ; they then wrap it up in teff bread like a cartridge. In the mean time, the man having put up his knife, with each hand resting upon his neighbour's knee, his body stooping, his head low and forward, and mouth open very like an idiot, he turns to the one whose cartridge is first ready, who stuffs the whole of it into his mouth, which is so full that he is in constant danger of being choaked. This is a mark of grandeur. The greater the man would seem to be, the larger piece he takes in his mouth ; and the more noise he makes in chewing it, the more polite he is thought to be. They have, indeed, a proverb that says, "Beggars and thieves only eat small pieces, or without making a noise." Having dispatched this morsel, which he does very expeditiously, his next female neighbour holds forth another cartridge, which goes the same way, and so on till he is satisfied. He never drinks till he has finished eating ; and before he begins, in gratitude to the fair one that fed him, he makes up two small rolls of the same kind and form ; each of his neighbours open their mouths at the same time, while with each hand he puts their portion into their mouths. He then falls to drinking out of a large handsome horn ; the ladies eat till they are satisfied, and then all drink together. A great deal of mirth and joke goes round, very seldom with any mixture of acrimony or ill humour. During all this time, the unfortunate victim at the

---

---

The Polyphemus banquet.

---

---

door is bleeding indeed, but bleeding little. As long as they can cut off the flesh from his bones, they do not meddle with the thighs, or the parts where the great arteries are. At last, they fall upon the thighs likewise; and soon after, the animal bleeding to death, becomes so tough, that the cannibals, who have the rest of it to eat, find very hard work to separate the flesh from the bones with their teeth like dogs. Mean while, those within are very much elevated; love lights all its fires, and every thing is permitted with absolute freedom. There is no coyness, no delay, no need of appointments or retirement, to gratify their wishes; there are no rooms but one, in which they sacrifice both to Bacchus and to Venus.

Although we read from the Jesuits a great deal about marriage and polygamy; yet there is nothing which may be averred more truly, than that there is no such thing as marriage in Abyssinia, unless that which is contracted by mutual consent, without other form, subsisting only till dissolved by dissent of one or other, and to be renewed or repeated as often as it is agreeable to both parties, who, when they please, cohabit together again as man and wife, after having been divorced, had children by others, or whether they have been married, or had children with others or not. Mr. Bruce remembers to have once been at Koscan in presence of the Iteghé, when, in the circle, there was a woman of great quality, and seven men who had all been her husbands, none of whom was the happy spouse at that time.

Upon separation they divide the children. The eldest son falls to the mother's first choice, and the eldest daughter to the father. If there be but one daughter, and all the rest sons, she is assigned to the father. If there be but one son, and all the rest daughters, he is the right of the mother. If the numbers are unequal after the first election, the rest are divided by lot. There is no such distinction as legitimate and illegitimate children, from the king to the beggar; for  
supposing

---

---

Polygamy allowed in Abyssinia.

---

---

supposing any one of their marriages valid, all the issue of the rest must be adulterous bastards.

The king in his marriage uses no other ceremony than this : he sends an Azage to the house where the lady lives, where the officer announces to her, it is the king's pleasure, that she should remove instantly to the palace. She then dresses herself in the best manner, and immediately obeys. Thenceforward he assigns her an apartment in the palace, and gives her a house elsewhere in any part she chooses. Then, when he makes her Iteghé, it seems to be the nearest resemblance to marriage ; for, whether in the court or the camp, he orders one of the judges to pronounce in his presence, that he, the king, has chosen his hand-maid, naming her for his queen ; upon which the crown is put upon her head, but she is not anointed.

The crown being hereditary in one family, but elective in the person, and polygamy being permitted, must have multiplied these heirs very much, and produced constant disputes, so that it was found necessary to provide a remedy for the anarchy and effusion of royal blood, which was otherwise inevitably to follow. The remedy was a humane and gentle one ; they were confined in a good climate upon a high mountain, and maintained there at the public expense. They are taught to read and write, but nothing else ; 750 cloths for wrapping round them, 3000 ounces of gold, which is 30,000 dollars, or crowns, are allowed by the state for their maintenance. These princes are hardly used ; and, in troublesome times, often put to death upon the smallest misinformation. Whilst Mr. Bruce was in Abyssinia, their revenue was so grossly misapplied, that some of them were said to have died with hunger and of cold, by the avarice and hard-heartedness of Michael neglecting to furnish them necessaries. Nor had the king, as far as ever Mr. Bruce could discern, that fellow-feeling, one would have expected from a prince, rescued  
from

---

 Military strength of Abyssinia.
 

---

from that very situation himself: however that be, and however distressing the situation of those princes, we cannot but be satisfied with it, when we look to the neighbouring kingdom of Sennaar, or Nubia. There no mountain is trusted with the confinement of their princes; but, as soon as the father dies, the throats of all the collaterals, and all their descendants, that can be laid hold of, are cut; and this is the case with all the black states in the desert west of Sennaar, Dar Fowr, Sele, and Bagirma.\*

In speaking of the military force of this kingdom, great exaggerations have been used. The largest army that ever was in the field was that in the rebellion before the battle of Serbraxos. When they first encamped upon the lake Tzana, the rebel army altogether might amount to about 50,000 men. In about a fortnight afterwards, many had deserted; and Mr. Bruce does not think (for he speaks only by hearsay) that, when the king marched out of Gondar, they were then above 30,000. When Gojam joined, and it was known that Michael and his army increased to above 60,000 men; cowards and brave, old and young, veteran soldiers and blackguards, all came to be spectators of that desirable event, which many of the wisest had despaired of living to see. The king's army, perhaps, never amounted to 26,000 men; and by desertion and other causes, when they  
retreated

---

\* Dr. Johnson's beautiful tale of Rasselas Prince of Abyssinia, where warmth of imagination, correct reasoning, and an extensive knowledge of the general manners of mankind, and of the various appearances of human life, are so eminently displayed, has already rendered this custom of the Abyssinian empire very generally known to English readers. He has converted the dreary mountain into a happy valley. He has excluded the real evils to which the confined princes are exposed; but has a sufficient resource *in ennuï* to embitter their enjoyments. The translation of Lobo's voyage was among Dr. Johnson's first literary efforts; but the information communicated by the Jesuit appears to have made a deep impression on his mind. The story of Rasselas, and the account of Seguid's vain resolution to dedicate a few days to happiness, in an island in the lake Dombea, are striking and noble proofs of this.



## Military strength of Abyssinia.

retreated to Gondar, Mr. Bruce does not suppose the army was 16,000, mostly from the province of Tigré. Fasil, indeed, had not joined; and putting his army at 12,000 men, it does not appear that any king of Abyssinia ever commanded 40,000 effective men at any time, or upon any cause whatever, exclusive of his household troops.

Their standards are large staves, surmounted at the top with a hollow ball; below this is a tube in which the staff is fixed; and immediately below the ball, a narrow stripe of silk made forked, or swallow-tailed, like a vane, and seldom much broader. The standards of the infantry have their flags painted two colours crossways—yellow, white, red, or green. The horse have all a lion upon their flag, some a red, some a green, and some a white lion. The black horse have a yellow lion, and over it a white star upon a red flag, alluding to two prophecies, the one, “Judah is a young lion,” and the other, “There shall come a star out of Judah.” This had been discontinued for want of cloth, till the war of Begemder, when a large piece was found in Joas’s wardrobe, and was thought a certain omen of his victory, and of a long and vigorous reign. This piece of cloth was said to have been brought from Cairo by Yasous II. for the campaign of Sennaar; and, with the other standards and colours, was surrendered to the rebels when the king was made prisoner.

The king’s household troops should consist of about 8000 infantry, 2000 of which carry firelocks, and supply the place of archers; bows have been laid aside for near a hundred years, and are only now used by the Waito Shangalla, and some other barbarous inconsiderable nations. These troops are divided into four companies, each under an officer called Shalaka, which answers to our colonel. Every twenty men have an officer, every fifty a second, and every hundred a third; that is, every twenty have one officer who commands them, but is commanded likewise by an

---



---

 The king's body-guards.
 

---



---

an officer, who commands the fifty; so that there are three officers who command fifty men, six command a hundred, and thirty command five hundred, over whom is the Shalaka; and this body they call *Bet*, which signifies a *house*, or *apartment*, because each of them goes by the name of one of the king's apartments. For example, there is an apartment called *Anbasa Bet*, or the *lion's house*, and a regiment carrying that name has the charge of it, and their duty is at that apartment, or that part of the palace where it is; there is another called *Jan Bet*, or the *elephant's house*, that gives the name to another called *Werk Sacala*, or the *gold house*, which gives its name to another corps; and so on with the rest.

There are four regiments, that seldom, if ever, amounted to 1600 men, which depend alone upon the king, and are all foreigners, at least the officers; these have the charge of his person while in the field. In times, when the king is out of leading-strings, they amount to four or five thousand, and then oppress the country, for they have great privileges. At times, when the king's hands are weak, they are kept incomplete out of fear and jealousy.

Before the king marches, three proclamations are made. The first is, "Buy your mules, get ready your provision, and pay your servants; for, after such a day, they that seek me here shall not find me." The second is about a week after, or according as the exigency is pressing; this is, "Cut down the kantuffa in the four quarters of the world, for I do not know where I am going." This kantuffa is a terrible thorn which very much molest the king and nobility in their march, by taking hold of their long hair, and the cotton cloth they are wrapped in. The third and last proclamation is, "I am encamped upon the Angrab, or Kahha; he that does not join me there, I will chastise him for seven years." Mr. Bruce was long in a doubt what this term of seven years meant, till he recollected the jubilee-year of the Jews, with whom

seven years was a prescription of offences, debts, and all trespasses.

The rains generally cease the eighth of September; a sickly season follows till they begin again about the 20th of October; they then continue pretty constant, but moderate in quantity, till Hedar St. Michael, the eighth of November. All epidemic diseases cease with the end of these rains, and it is then the armies begin to march.

In Abyssinia, there are more churches than in any other country; and, though it is very mountainous, and consequently the view much obstructed, it is very seldom you see less than five or six; and, if you are on a commanding ground, five times that number. Every great man that dies thinks he has atoned for all his wickedness, if he leaves a fund to build a church, or has built one in his lifetime. The king builds many. Wherever a victory is gained, there a church is erected in the very field stinking with the putrid bodies of the slain. Formerly this was only the case when the enemy was Pagan or Infidel; now the same is observed when the victories are over Christians. The situation of a church is always chosen near running water, for the convenience of their purifications and ablutions, in which they strictly observe the Levitical law. They are always placed upon the top of some beautiful round hill, which is surrounded entirely with rows of the oxycedrus, or Virginia cedar, which grows here in great beauty and perfection, and is called Arz. Nothing adds so much to the beauty of the country as these churches, and the plantations about them. In the middle of this plantation of cedars is interspersed, at proper distances, a number of those beautiful trees called Cuffo, which grow very high, and are all extremely picturesque.

The churches are all round, with thatched roofs; their summits are perfect cones; the outside is surrounded by a number of wooden pillars, which are nothing else than the trunks of the cedar-tree, and

## Abyssinian church ceremonies.

are placed to support the edifice, about eight feet of the roof projecting beyond the wall of the church, which forms an agreeable walk or colonnade around it in hot weather, or in rain. The inside of the church is in several divisions, according as is prescribed by the law of Moses. The first is a circle somewhat wider than the inner one; here the congregation sit and pray. Within this is a square, and that square is divided by a veil or curtain, in which is another very small division answering to the holy of holies. This is so narrow, that none but the priests can go into it. You are bare-footed, whenever you enter the church, and, if bare-footed, you may go through every part of it, if you have any such curiosity, provided you are pure, that is, have not had connexion with women for twenty-four hours before, or touched carrion or dead bodies, (a curious assemblage of ideas) for in that case you are not to go within the precincts, or outer circumference, of the church, but stand and say your prayers at an awful distance among the cedars.

Every person of both sexes, under Jewish disqualifications, is obliged to observe this distance; and this is always a place belonging to the church, where, except in Lent, you see the greatest part of the congregation; but this is left to your own conscience; and, if there was either great inconvenience in the one situation, or great satisfaction in the other, the case would be otherwise.

On your first entering the church, you put off your shoes: but you must leave a servant there with them, or else they will be stolen, if good for any thing, by the priests and monks, before you come out of the church. At entering you kiss the threshold, and the two door-posts, go in and say what prayer you please; that finished, you come out again, and your duty is over. The churches are full of pictures, painted on parchment, and nailed upon the walls in a manner little less slovenly than you see paltry prints in beggarly country ale-houses. There has been al-

## Abyssinian church ornaments.

ways a sort of painting known among the scribes, a daubing much inferior to the worst of our sign-painters. Sometimes for a particular church, they get a number of pictures of saints, on skins of parchment, ready finished from Cairo, in a style very little superior to these performances of their own. They are placed like a frise, and hung in the upper part of the wall. St. George is generally there with his dragon, and St. Demetrius fighting a lion. There is no choice in their saints; they are both of the Old and New Testament, and those that might be dispensed with from both. There is St. Pontius Pilate and his wife; there is St. Balaam and his ass; Samson and his jaw-bone; and so of the rest. But the thing that surprised Mr. Bruce most was a kind of square-miniature upon the head-piece, or mitre, of the priest, administering the sacrament at Adowa, representing Pharaoh on a white horse plunging in the Red Sea, with many guns and pistols swimming upon the surface of it around him.

Nothing embossed, or in relief, ever appears in any of their churches; all this would be reckoned idolatry, so much so that they do not wear a cross, as has been represented, on the top of the ball of the sendick, or standard, because it casts a shade; but there is no doubt that pictures have been used in their churches from the very earliest ages of Christianity.

The primate or patriarch of the Abyssinian Church is styled Abuna. The first of these prelates mentioned in history is Tecla Hainanout, who distinguished himself by the restoration of the royal family, and the regulations which he made both in church and state. A wise ordinance was then enacted that the Abyssinians should not have it in their power to raise one of their own countrymen to the dignity of Abuna. As this dignitary of the church very seldom understands the language of the country, he has no share in the government. His chief employment is in ordinations, which ceremony is thus performed. A number of men and children present themselves at a distance,

---

---

The creed of the Abyssinians.

---

---

and there stand from humility, not daring to approach him. He then asks who these are, and they tell him that they wish to be deacons. On this he makes two or three signs with a small cross in his hand, and blows with his mouth twice or thrice upon them, saying: "Let them be deacons." Mr. Bruce once saw the whole army of Begemder, when just returned from shedding the blood of 10,000 men, made deacons by the Abuna, who stood about a quarter of a mile distant from them. With these were mingled about 1000 women, who, having part of the same blast and brandishment of the cross, were consequently as good deacons as the rest.

The Itchegue, the chief of the monks, is a man in troublesome times of much greater importance than the Abuna. There are after the monks, chief-priests and scribes, as in the Jewish church, the lowest of whom are the ignorant careless copiers of the holy scriptures. The monks do not live in convents as in Europe, but in separate habitations round their church, and each cultivates a portion of the land belonging to them. The priests have their maintenance assigned to them in kind, and do not labour. A steward, being a layman, is placed among them by the king, who receives all the rents belonging to the churches, and distributes among the priests the portion that is their due; but neither the Abuna, nor any other churchman, has a right to interfere, or to touch the revenues of the church.

The articles of the faith of the Abyssinians having been enquired into, and discussed with so much keenness in the beginning of last century, Mr. Bruce was afraid he should disoblige some of his readers if he had passed this subject without notice.

Their first bishop, Frumentius, being ordained about the year 333, and instructed in the religion of the Greeks of the church of Alexandria by St. Athanasius, then sitting in the chair of St. Mark, it follows that the true religion of the Abyssinians, which they received

---

---

The creed of the Abyssinians.

---

---

received on their conversion to Christianity, is that of the Greek church; and every rite or ceremony in the Abyssinian church may be found and traced up to its origin in the Greek churches, while both of them were orthodox. Frumentius preserved Abyssinia untainted with heresy till the day of his death. We find from a letter preserved in the works of St. Athanasius, that Constantius, the heretical Greek emperor, wished St. Athanasius to deliver him up, which that patriarch refused to do; indeed at that time it was not in his power.

Soon after this Arianism, and a number of other heresies, each in turn, were brought by the monks from Egypt, and infected the church of Abyssinia. A great part of these heresies, in the beginning, were certainly owing to the difference of the languages in those times, and especially the two words Nature and Person; than which no two words were ever more equivocal in every language in which they have been translated.

It was settled by the first general council, that one baptism only was necessary for the regeneration of man, for freeing him from the sin of our first parents, and listing him under the banner of Christ. —“ I confess one baptism for the remission of sins,” says the Symbol. It was maintained by the Jesuits, that in Abyssinia, once every year they baptized all grown people, or adults. Mr. Bruce here relates what he himself saw on the spot, and what is nothing more than the celebration of our Saviour’s baptism.

The small river, running between the town of Adowa and the church, had been dammed up for several days; the stream was scanty, so that it scarcely overflowed. It was in places three feet deep, in some, perhaps, four, or little more. Three large tents were pitched the morning before the feast of the Epiphany; one on the north for the priests to repose in during intervals of the service, and, beside this, one to communicate in: on the south there was a third tent for  
the

---

---

The ceremony of sprinkling.

---

---

the monks and priests of another church to rest themselves in their turn. About twelve o'clock at night, the monks and priests met together, and began their prayers and psalms at the water-side, one party relieving each other. At dawn of day, the governor, Welleta Michael, came thither with some soldiers to raise men for Ras Michael, then on his march against Waragna Fasil, and sat down on a small hill by the water-side, the troops all skirmishing on foot and on horseback around them.

As soon as the sun began to appear, three large crosses of wood were carried by three priests dressed in their sacerdotal vestments, and who, coming to the side of the river, dipped the cross into the water, and all this time the firing, skirmishing, and praying, went on together. The priests with their crosses returned, one of their number before them carrying something less than an English quart of water in a silver cup or chalice: when they were about fifty yards from Welleta Michael, that general stood up, and the priest took as much water as he could hold in his hands, and sprinkled it upon his head, holding the cup at the same time to Welleta Michael's mouth to taste: after which the priest received it back again, saying, at the same time, "Gzier y'barak," which is simply, "May God bless you." Each of the three crosses were then brought forward to Welleta Michael, and he kissed them. The ceremony of sprinkling the water was then repeated to all the great men in the tent, all cleanly dressed as in gala. Some of them not contented with aspersion, received it in the palms of their hands joined, and drank it there; more water was brought for those that had not partaken of the first; and after the whole of the governor's company was sprinkled, the crosses returned to the river, their bearers singing *hallelujahs*, and the skirmishing and firing continuing.

Mr. Bruce observed, that, a very little time after the governor had been sprinkled, two horses and two mules, belonging to Ras Michael and Ozoro Esther, came



## The eucharist.

came and were washed. Afterwards the soldiers went in and bathed their horses and guns; those who had wounds bathed them also. Heaps of platters and pots, that had been used by Mahometans or Jews, were brought thither likewise to be purified; and thus the whole ended.

Mr. Bruce saw this ceremony performed afterwards at Kahha, near Gondar, in presence of the king, who drank some of the water, and was sprinkled by the priests; then took the cup in his hand, and threw the rest that was left upon Amha Yasous, saying, "I will be your deacon;" and this was thought a high compliment, the priest giving him his blessing at the same time, but offering him no more water.

The Abyssinians receive the holy sacrament in both kinds, in unleavened bread, and in the grape bruised with the husk together as it grows, so that it is a kind of marmalade, and is given in a flat spoon: whatever they may pretend, some mixture seems necessary to keep it from fermentation in the state that it is in, unless the dried cluster is fresh bruised just before it is used, for it is little more fluid than the common marmalade of confectioners; but it is perfectly the grape as it grew, bruised stones and skin together. Some means, however, have been used, as Mr. Bruce supposes, to prevent fermentation, and make it keep; and though this is constantly denied, he has often thought he tasted a flavour that was not natural to the grape itself.

It is a mistake that there is no wine in Abyssinia; for a quantity of excellent strong wine is made at Dreedla, south-west from Gondar, about thirty miles, which would more than supply the quantity necessary for the celebration of the eucharist in all Abyssinia twenty times over. The people themselves are not fond of wine, and plant the vine in one place only; and in this they have been imitated by the Egyptians, their colony; but a small black grape of an excellent flavour, grows plentifully wild in every wood in Tigré.

## The eucharist.

Large pieces of bread are given to the communicants in proportion to their quality; and Mr. Bruce has seen great men, who, though they opened their mouths as wide as a man conveniently can do, yet from the respect the priest bore them, such a portion of the loaf was put into their mouths that water run from their eyes, from the incapacity of chewing it; which, however, they do as indecently, and with full as much noise, as they eat at table.

After receiving the sacrament of the eucharist in both kinds, a pitcher of water is brought, of which the communicant drinks a large draught: and well he needs it, to wash down the quantity of bread he has just swallowed. He then retires from the steps of the inner division upon which the administering priests stands; and, turning his face to the wall of the church, in private says some prayer with seeming decency and attention.

Mr. Bruce finishes this subject with the relation of a circumstance that happened a few months before his coming into Abyssinia, as it was accidentally told him by the priest of Adowa, the very day of the Epiphany, and which Janni vouched to be true, and to have seen.

The Sunday after Ras Michael's departure for Gondar from Adowa, he went to the church in great pomp, and there received the sacrament. There happened to be such a crowd to see him that the wine, part of the consecrated elements, was thrown down and spilt upon the steps whereon the communicants stood at receiving. Some straw or hay was instantly gathered and sprinkled upon it to cover it, and the communicants continued the service to the end, treading that grass under foot. This giving great offence to Janni, and some few priests that lived with him, it was told Michael, who, without explaining himself, said only, "As to the fact of throwing the hay, they are a parcel of hogs, and know no better." These few words had stuck in the stomach of the priest  
of

---

---

Conversation respecting the Eucharist.

---

---

of Adowa, who, with great secrecy, and as a mark of friendship, begged Mr. Bruce would give him his opinion—what he should have done, or rather what would have been done in his country? Mr. Bruce told him, that the answer to his question depended upon two things, which being known his difficulties would be very easily solved. “If you do believe that the wine spilt by the mob upon the steps, and trodden under foot afterwards, was really the blood of Jesus Christ, then you were guilty of a most horrid crime, and you should cry upon the mountains to cover you; and ages of atonement are not sufficient to expiate it. You should, in the mean time, have railed the place round with iron, or built it round with stone, that no foot, or any thing else but the dew of heaven, could have fallen upon it; or you should have brought in the river upon the place that would have washed it all to the sea, and covered it ever after from sacrilegious profanation. But if, on the contrary, you believe, (as many Christian churches do,) that the wine (notwithstanding consecration) remained in the cup nothing more than wine, but was only the symbol, or type, of Christ’s blood of the New Testament, then the spilling it upon the steps, and the treading upon it afterwards; having been merely accidental, and out of your power to prevent, being so far from your wish that you are heartily sorry that it happened, I do not reckon that you are further liable in the crime of sacrilege, than if the wine had not been consecrated at all. You are to humble yourself, and sincerely regret that so irreverent an accident happened in your hands, and in your time; but as you did not intend it, and could not prevent it, the consequence of an accident, where inattention is exceedingly culpable, will be imputed to you, and nothing further.” The priest declared to Mr. Bruce, with the greatest earnestness, that he never did believe that the elements in the eucharist were converted by consecration into the real body and blood of Christ.

He said, however, that he believed this to be the Roman Catholic faith, but it never was his; and that he conceived the bread was bread, and the wine was wine, even after consecration. From this example, which occurred merely accidentally, and was not the fruit of interrogation or curiosity, it appears to Mr. Bruce, whatever the Jesuits say, that some at least among the Abyssinians do not believe the real presence in the eucharist; but further our traveller is not enough informed to give a positive opinion.

The Abyssinians are not all agreed about the state of souls before the resurrection of the body. The opinion which generally prevails is, that there is no third state; but that, after the example of the thief, the souls of good men enjoy the beatific vision immediately upon the separation from the body. But their practice and books both contradict this; for, as often as any person dies, alms are given, and prayers are offered for the souls of those departed, which would be vain did they believe they were already in the presence of God, and in possession of the greatest bliss possible, wanting nothing to complete it.

The Abyssinians practise circumcision, which is performed with a sharp knife, or razor. There is no laceration with the nails, no formula or repetition of words, nor any religious ceremony at the time of the operation; nor is it done at any particular age; and generally it is a woman that is the surgeon. The Falasha say they perform it sometimes with the edge of a sharp stone, sometimes with a knife or razor, and at other times with the nails of their fingers; and for this purpose they have the nails of their little fingers of an immoderate length: at the time of the operation the priest chants a hymn, or verse, importing, "Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast ordained circumcision!" This is performed on the eighth day, and is a religious rite, according to the first institution by God to Abraham.

There is another ceremony, which regards the women also, and which Mr. Bruce calls *incision*. This

---



---

Their mode of computing time.

---



---

is an usage frequent, and still retained among the Jews, though positively prohibited by the law. "Thou shalt not cut thy face for the sake of, or on account of, the dead." As soon as a near relation dies in Abyssinia, a brother or parent, consin-german or lover, every woman in that relation, with the nail of her little finger, which she leaves long on purpose, cuts the skin of both her temples, about the size of a sixpence; and therefore you see either a wound or a scar in every fair face in Abyssinia; and in the dry season, when the camp is out, from the loss of friends, they seldom have liberty to heal, till peace and the army return with the rains.

The Abyssinians, like the ancient Egyptians, their first colony, in computing their time, have continued the use of the solar year. Diodorus Siculus says, "They do not reckon their time by the moon, but according to the sun; that thirty days constitute their month, to which they add five days and the fourth part of a day, and this completes their year."

It is uncertain whence they derived the names of their months; they have no signification in any of the languages of Abyssinia. The name of the first month among the old Egyptians has continued to this day. It is Tot, probably so called from the first division of time among the Egyptians, from observation of the heliacal rising of the dog-star. The names of the months retained in Abyssinia are possibly in antiquity prior to this; they are probably those given them by the Cushite, before the Kalendars at Thebes and Meroe, their colony, were formed.

The Abyssinians have another way of describing time peculiar to themselves; they read the whole of the four evangelists every year in their churches. They begin with Matthew, then proceed to Mark, Luke, and John, in order; and when they speak

---

 Great inaccuracy of the Abyssinian chronology.
 

---

of an event, they write and say it happened in the days of Matthew, that is, in the first quarter of the year, while the Gospel of St. Matthew was yet reading in the churches. They compute the time of the day in a very arbitrary irregular manner. The twilight is very short, almost imperceptible, and was still more so when the court was removed farther to the southward in Shoa. As soon as the sun falls below the horizon, night comes on, and all the stars appear. This term, then, the twilight, they choose for the beginning of their day, and call it *Naggé*, which is the very time the twilight of the morning lasts. The same is observed at night, and *Meset* is meant to signify the instant of beginning the twilight, between the sun's falling below the horizon and the stars appearing. Mid-day is by them called *Kater*, a very old word, which signifies *culmination*, or a thing's being arrived or placed at the middle or highest part of an arch. All other times, in conversation, they describe by pointing at the place in the heavens where the sun was, when what they are describing happened.

Nothing can be more inaccurate than all Abyssinian calculations. Besides their absolute ignorance in arithmetic, their excessive idleness and aversion to study, and a number of fanciful, whimsical combinations, by which every particular scribe or monk distinguishes himself, there are obvious reasons why there should be a variation between their chronology and ours. The beginning of our years differs from theirs; ours begins on the 1st of January, and theirs on the 1st day of September, so that there are eight months' difference between us. The last day of August may be the year 1780 with us, and 1779 only with the Abyssinians. And in the reign of their kings, they very seldom mention either month or day beyond an even number of years. Supposing, then, it is known that the reign of ten kings extended from such to such a period, where all the months and days

---

---

Irremediable discrepancies of their dates.

---

---

days are comprehended, when we come to assign to each of these an equal number of years, without the correspondent months and days, it is plain that, when all these separate reigns come to be added together, the one sum-total will not agree with the other, but will be more or less than the just time which that prince reigned. This, indeed, as errors compensate full as frequently as they accumulate, will seldom amount to a difference of above three years, a space of time too trivial to be of any consequence in the history of barbarous nations.

---

---

---



---

Cowardice of Abdel Jelleel, who is

---



---

## CHAPTER IV.

---



---

Mr. Bruce is appointed Governor of Ras el Feel—Description of Gondar—Battle of Banja—Conspiracy against Michael—The author retires to Emfras—Description of Gondar—First unsuccessful journey of the author to discover the sources of the Nile—Cataract of Alata—Alarm on approaching the Army—Adventure of Mr. Bruce's Greek attendants—Dangerous Passage of the Nile—Battle of Limjour—Unexpected Peace with Fasil—Return to Gondar.

ON the south part of Abyssinia, on the frontiers of Sennaar, is a hot, unwholesome, low stripe of country, inhabited entirely by Mahometans, where Mr. Bruce's friend Ayto Confu possessed many districts of land from his father Kasmati Netcho, as well as some belonging to his mother Ozoro Esther. It was called Ras el Feel; and as it was also governed by a deputy who was a Mahometan, it had no rank among the great governments of the state. Ras Michael had given Confu other lands in addition to his patrimony, and with them, this government, young as he was, from favour to his mother. His deputy, Abdel Jelleel, was a great coward, and had refused to bring out his men, though summoned to join the king, when marching against Fasil. He had also quarrelled with the Daveina, a tribe of Arabs of Sennaar, who no longer came hither to trade, and brought no more horses as they had been accustomed to do, so that the district was in consequence nearly ruined, and a great outcry was raised against the deputy by the merchants who used to frequent that market. Confu now resolved to send Amnonias, his Billetana Gueta, to supersede Abdel Jelleel, but Ras Michael put him as a man of trust over the black horse; on which he determined to repair in person to his government, and settle another deputy there. With this view he applied



---

removed from the office of deputy of Ras el Feel.

---

plied to the king for the assistance of some troops, by which means his intention came to the knowledge of Mr. Bruce.

The first time that our traveller saw Ozoro Esther, he told her that unless she wished her son to die speedily, she should exert all her influence and authority to dissuade him from going to Ras el Feel, where the bloody flux never ceased to rage; and this complaint had not entirely left him since he had the small-pox, but had worn him to a shadow. There could therefore be no surer way of destroying him, than suffering him to repair thither, as he proposed. These representations of Mr. Bruce filled Confu's mother and the Iteghé, whose chief favourite he was, with such alarm that the Ras positively forbade his departure.

Negade Ras Mahomet, the principal of the Mahometans in Abyssinia, and brother of Hagi Saleh, who had procured Mr. Bruce his first lodging at Gondar, was a favorite of the Ras, and had always shewn a great regard for our traveller. This man came to him one morning, and told him that Yasine who had accompanied him to Abyssinia, and been recommended to him by Metical Aga, had married Abdel Jelleel's daughter, and that a son of Saleh, had married a daughter of Yasine. He said that in all Abyssinia there was not a braver soldier or a better horseman than the latter; that he was a man of probity and honour; that the people of Ras el Feel wished to have him for their governor in the room of Abdel Jelleel; and that all the Arabs, as well as Shekh Fidele, Governor of Atbara, for Sennaar, shared the same sentiments. Mahomet durst not apply to the Ras concerning this business for fear of Ozoro Esther, who was thought to favour Abdel Jelleel; but he promised that if Ayto Confu would appoint Yasine in his stead, he would give him fifty ounces of gold, besides what Yasine should allow upon his settlement.

Mr. Bruce was the more disposed to exert his influence in behalf of Yasine, as he had already determined,

---

Consultation respecting the appointment of a new deputy.

---

mined, whenever he left Abyssinia, to return by way of Sennaar, and never to trust himself again in the hands of the sanguinary Naybe of Masuah. He conceived that such the arrangement here proposed could not fail to forward his views in this respect, and that he should derive great advantage from Yasmine's friendship with the Arabs and the shekh of Atbara. Having first consulted Ayto Aylo, he made him propose it to Ozorø Esther; but on speaking to that princess, he found that there was something embroiled in the affair, and apprehended that the objection was to Yasmine. He resolved nevertheless to mention it himself to Confu that Yasmine might be kept no longer in suspense. An opportunity soon offered; and Mr. Bruce availed himself of it. To his no small surprize Confu replied: I have as good an opinion of Yasmine as you can have, and as bad a one of Abdel Jelleel as any man in Gondar; for which too I have a sufficient reason, as it is but lately the king told me, peevishly enough, that I did not look to my affairs, (which is true) as he understood that the district was ruined by neglect. But I am no longer Governor of Ras el Feel. I have resigned it. I hope they will appoint a wiser and a better man; let him choose for his deputy Yasmine, or whom else he pleases; for I have sworn by the head of the Iteghé, that I will no more meddle or make with the government of Ras el Feel." Mr. Bruce now lost no time in repairing to Ozoro Esther to intercede for the government for Yasmine.

Among the crowd he first met Tecla Mariam, the king's secretary, whom he informed of his errand. "Why dont you appoint Yasmine yourself?" replied the secretary. "You may thank the king for yourself, but I would advise you not to say one word to him concerning Yasmine; it is not the custom; you may, if you please to Confu; he knows him already. His estate lies all round you, and he will enforce your orders, if there should be any need."

"Pardon me, "Tecla Mariam," said Mr. Bruce, "if I

## Indisposition of Mr. Bruce.

do not understand you. I came to solicit for Yasine, that Confu or his successor would appoint him their deputy, and you answer that you advise me to appoint him myself." "And so I do," replied Tecla Mariam. "Who is to appoint him but you? You are Governor of Ras el Feel: are you not?" Mr. Bruce stood motionless with astonishment. "It is no great affair," said he, "and I hope you will never see it. It is a hot, unwholesome country, full of Mahometans; but its gold is as good as any Christian gold whatever. I wish it had been Begemder with all my heart; but there is a good time coming."

Mr. Bruce, after having recovered himself a little from his surprise, went to Ayto Confu to kiss his hand as his superior; but this he would by no means suffer him to do. A great dinner was provided them by the Iteghé: and Yasine being sent for, was appointed and clothed, that is invested, and ordered immediately to Ras el Feel to his government, to make peace with the Daveina, and bring all the horses he could get with him from thence, or from Atbara. The having thus provided for Yasine, and secured, as he thought, a retreat to Sennaar for himself, gave Mr. Bruce the first real pleasure that he had received since his landing at Masuah; and that day, seeing himself in company with all his friends, for the first time since his arrival in Abyssinia, he abandoned himself to joy.

His constitution was, however, too much weakened to bear any excesses. The day after, when he went home to Emfras, he found himself attacked with a slow fever, and, thinking that it was the prelude to an ague, with which he was often tormented, he fell to taking bark, without any remission, or, where the remission was very obscure, he shut himself up in the house, upon his constant regimen of boiled rice, with abundant draughts of cold water.

A commotion arose about this time, at Gondar, on account of a religious dispute. Mr. Bruce was induced to hasten thither by hearing that his friend Tecla

## Religious dispute.

Mariam, and his daughter of the same name, one of the most beautiful women in Abyssinia, had both been taken ill. Soon after his arrival, he learned that the origin of the dispute, and the quarrel which it occasioned, was a question concerning the fate of Nebuchadnezzar,—Whether he was now a saint in heaven, or burning in hell fire with Dathan and Abiram? He was at the same time informed, that however indifferent he might be about the matter in dispute, he would not be easily able to avoid declaring his sentiments, nor escape danger, whatever these might be. His friends accordingly insisted on attending him, to protect him in the streets: and Ayto Aylo and Ayto Heikel accompanied him to Tecla Mariam's. Neither that nobleman nor his daughter was very much indisposed. Some other friends were with him, and the evening was passed in great festivity.

Next day Mr. Bruce waited on the king. One of the first questions his majesty put to him was, Whether or not Nebuchadnezzar was a saint? Mr. Bruce first declined to give his opinion; and when urged, declared against the monarch of Babylon. His majesty then produced so many reasons in Nebuchadnezzar's favour, that Mr. Bruce could no longer insist on his damnation. Tecla Mariam soon after came in: and Mr. Bruce took the first opportunity of mentioning Nebuchadnezzar to *him*; and his friend the secretary's sentiments concerning the merits of that hero were not more favourable or more settled than his own. He informed him, however, that Ras Michael was about to take a very expeditious and efficacious method of terminating the dispute. A proclamation was soon after issued, ordering the monks and other disorderly persons, who had resorted to the city on this occasion, to be gone, and announcing that four hundred Galla were to patrol and scour the streets at night, and that others were to watch and clear the roads. This put a speedy end to the concern for Nebuchad-

## Battle of Banja.

Nebuchadnezzar, and the impertinences of the monks.

At this time a piece of bad news was circulated at Gondar, that Kasmati Boro, whom the Ras had left governor at Damot, had been beaten by Fasil, and obliged to retire to his own country in Gojam, to Stadis Amba, near the passage of the Nile, at Miné; and that Fasil, with a much larger army of Galla than that which he had brought to Fagitta, had taken possession of Buré, the usual place of his residence. This being privately talked of as true, Mr. Bruce asked Kefla Yasous in confidence what he knew of it. Upon its being confirmed, he could not disguise his sorrow, as he was convinced this unexpected turn of affairs would be an invincible obstacle to his reaching the source of the Nile. "You are mistaken," said Kefla Yasous, "it is the best thing that could happen for you. Why you desire to see those places I do not know; but this I am sure of, you never will arrive there with any degree of safety while Fasil commands. He is as perfect a Galla as ever forded the Nile: he has neither word, nor oath, nor faith, that can bind; he does mischief for mischief's sake, and then laughs at it."

After Fasil's defeat at Fagitta, and the affront he received at Assoa in the heart of his own country, he had continued his route to Buré, a district of the Agows, where was his constant residence. After this he had crossed the Nile into the country of Bizamo, and Boro de Gago had taken up his residence at Buré, when Michael returned to Gondar; but no sooner had Fasil heard of his arrival in those parts, than he marched with a number of horse, and forced his rival to retire to Gojam.

A very obstinate battle was fought at Banja, in which the Agows were entirely defeated by Fasil, seven of their chiefs killed, all men of great consequence; among whom was Ayamico, a very near relation of the king. The news was first brought by a

---

 General armament against Fasil.
 

---

son of Nanna Georgis, chief of the Agows, who escaped from the battle. Michael was at dinner, and Mr. Bruce was present. It was one of his carousals for the marriage of Powussen, when young Georgis came into the room, in a torn and dirty habit, unattended, and almost unperceived, and presented himself at the foot of the table. Michael had then in his hand a cup of gold, it being the exclusive privilege of the governor of the province of Tigré to drink out of such a cup; it was full of wine; before a word was spoken, and upon the first appearance of the man, he threw the cup and wine upon the ground, and cried out, "I am guilty of the death of these people." Every one rose, the table was removed, and Georgis told his misfortune, that Nanna Georgis his father, Zeegam Georgis, the next in rank among them, Ayamico the king's relation, and four other chiefs, were slain at Banja, and their race nearly extirpated by a victory gained with much bloodshed, and afterwards cruelly followed up in retaliation for that of Fagitta.

A council was immediately called, where it was resolved, that, though the rainy season was at hand, the utmost expedition should be made to take the field; that Gusho and Powussen should return to their provinces, and increase their army to the utmost of their power; that the king should take the low road by Foggora and Dara, there to join the troops of Begemder and Amhara, cross the Nile at the mouth of the lake, above the second cataract, as it is called, and march thence straight to Buré, which, by speedy marches, might be done in five or six days. No resolution was ever embraced with more alacrity; the cause of the Agows was the cause of Gondar, or famine would else immediately follow. The king's troops and those of Michael were all ready, and had just refreshed themselves by a week's festivity.

Gusho and Powussen, after having sworn to Michael that they would never return without Fasil's head, decamped next morning, with very different intentions

---

---

Conspiracy against Michael.

---

---

intentions in their hearts; for no sooner had they reached Begemder than they entered into a conspiracy in form against Michael, which they had long meditated; they had resolved to make peace with Fasil, and swear with him a solemn league, that they were to have but one cause, one council, and one interest, till they had deprived Michael of his life and dignity.

All this time Mr. Bruce found himself declining in health, to which the irregularities of the last week had greatly contributed. The king and Ras had sufficiently provided tents and conveniencies for him; yet he wanted to construct for himself a tent, with a large slit in the roof, that he might have an opportunity of taking observations with his quadrant, without being inquired by troublesome or curious visitors. He therefore obtained leave from the king to go to Emfras, a town about twenty miles south from Gondar, where a number of Mahometan tent-makers lived. Gusho had a house there, and a pleasant garden, which he very willingly gave Mr. Bruce the use of, with this advice, however, which at the time he did not understand, rather to go on to Amhara with him, for he would there sooner recover his health, and be more in quiet, than with the king or Michael. As the king was to pass immediately under this town, and as most of those that loaded and unloaded his tents and baggage were Mahometans, and lived at Emfras, he could not be better situated, or more at his liberty and ease, than there.

After having taken his leave of the king and the Ras, he paid the same compliment to the Iteghé at Koscam. That excellent princess endeavoured much to dissuade Mr. Bruce from leaving Gondar. She treated the intention of going to the source of the Nile as a fantastic folly, unworthy of any man of sense or understanding, and very earnestly advised him to stay under her protection at Koscam, till he saw whether Ras Michael and the king would return, and then take the first good opportunity of returning

---

The Queen of Gondar advises Mr. Bruce to abandon

---

to his own country through Tigré, the way that he came, before any evil should overtake him.

Mr. Bruce excused himself in the best manner he could. It was not easy to do it with any degree of conviction to people utterly unlearned, and who knew nothing of the prejudice of ages in favour of the attempt he was engaged in. He therefore turned the discourse to professions of gratitude for benefits that he had every day received from her, and for the very great honour she then did him, when she condescended to testify her anxiety concerning the fate of a poor unknown traveller like him, who could not possibly have any merit but what arose from her own gracious and generous sentiments, and universal charity, that extended to every object in proportion as they were helpless.

“See,” said she, “how every day furnishes us with proofs of the perverseness and contradiction of human nature. You are come from Jerusalem through vile Turkish governments, and hot unwholesome climates, to see a river and a bog, no part of which you can carry away, were it ever so valuable, and of which you have in your own country a thousand larger, better, and cleaner; and you take it ill when I discourage you from the pursuit of this fancy, in which you are likely to perish without your friends at home ever hearing when or where the accident happened: while I, on the other hand, the mother of kings, who have sat upon the throne of this country more than thirty years, have for my only wish night and day, that, after giving up every thing in the world, I could be conveyed to the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, and beg alms for my subsistence all my life after, if I could only be buried at last within sight of the gate of that temple where our Blessed Saviour once lay.” This was said in the most melancholy tone, an unusual gloom hanging upon her countenance. Her desiring Mr. Bruce to stay at Koscam till he knew whether the

the



---

---

his design of exploring the source of the Nile.

---

---

the king or Michael would return or not, considering the large army which they were to lead to the field, and the weakness of Fasil, after repeated defeats, caused him to apprehend that there was something behind with which he was yet unacquainted.

Gold, and orders for provisions and cattle while at Emfras, followed this conversation with the queen, whom Mr. Bruce left much affected with the disposition in which he had found her. Though he was ready at first to yield to apprehension, and had the way been open through Tigré to have perhaps taken the queen's advice, and returned without accomplishing the grand object of his expedition; yet the great preparations making in Gondar, and the assurances which he received from every one, that, safe in the midst of a victorious army, he might explore at his leisure the famous fountains of the Nile, raised his spirits, roused his ambition, and caused him to consider it as a kind of treason to his country to renounce a discovery which had baffled the courage and perseverance of the bravest men in all ages.

Gondar, the metropolis of Abyssinia, is situated upon a hill of considerable height, the top of it nearly plain, on which the town is placed. It consists of about ten thousand families in time of peace; the houses are chiefly of clay, the roofs thatched in the form of cones, which is always the construction within the tropical rains. On the west end of the town is the king's house, formerly a structure of considerable consequence; it was a square building, flanked with square towers; it was formerly four stories high, and, from the top of it, had a magnificent view of all the country southward to the lake Tzana. Great part of this house is now in ruins, having been burnt at different times; but there is still ample lodging in the two lowest floors of it, the audience-chamber being above one hundred and twenty feet long. A succession of kings have built apartments by the side of it of clay only, in the manner and fashion of their own country;

for

---

 The palace of Koscam.
 

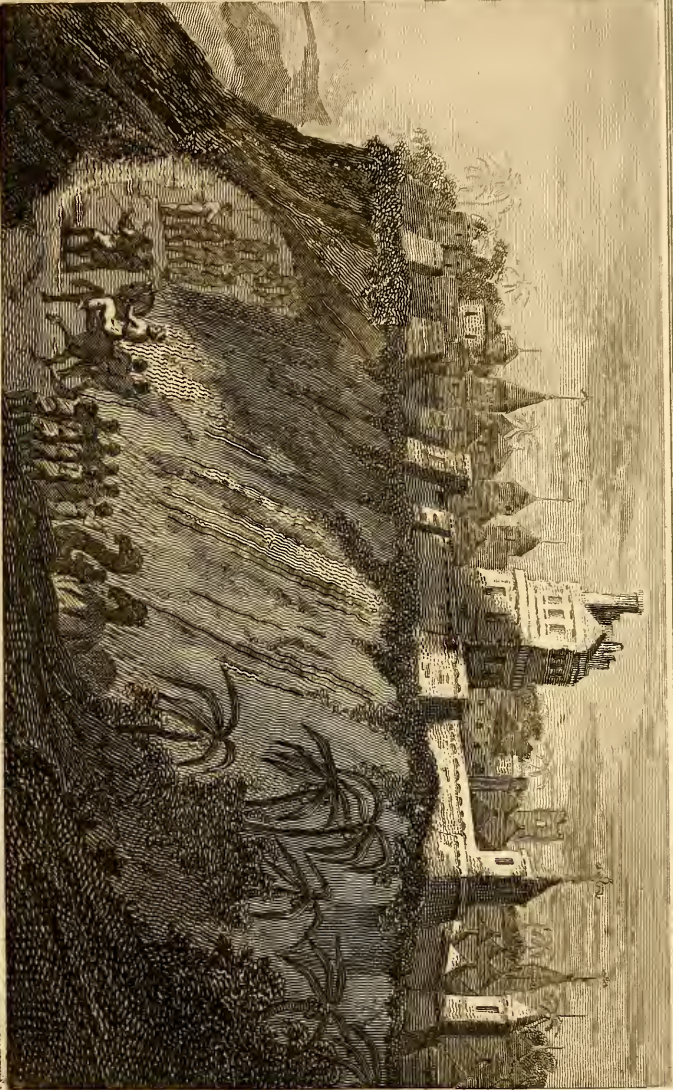
---

for the palace itself was built by masons from India, in the time of Facilidas, and by such Abyssinians as had been instructed in architecture by the Jesuits without embracing their religion, and afterwards remained in the country unconnected with the expulsion of the Portuguese, during that prince's reign.

The palace, and all the contiguous buildings, are surrounded by a substantial stone wall thirty feet high, with battlements upon the outer wall, and a parapet roof between the outer and inner, by which you can go along the whole and look into the street. There appears to have never been any embrasures for cannon, and the four sides of this wall are above an English mile and a half in length.

The mountain, or hill, on which the town is situated, is surrounded on every side by a deep valley, which has three outlets; the one to the south to Dembea, Maitsha, and the Agows: the second to the north-west towards Sennaar, over the high mountain Debra Tzai, or the Mountain of the Sun, at the root of which Koscam, the palace of the Iteghé, is situated, and the low countries of Walkayt and Waldubba: the third is to the north to Woggora, over the high mountain Lamalmon, and so on through Tigré to the Red Sea. The river Kahha, coming from the Mountain of the Sun, or Debra Tzai, runs through the valley, and covers all the south of the town; the Angrab, falling upon Woggora, surrounds it on the N. N. E. These rivers join at the bottom of the hill, about a quarter of a mile south of the town.

Immediately upon the bank opposite to Gondar, on the other side of the river, is a large town of Mahometans of about a thousand houses. These are all active and laborious people; great part of them are employed in taking care of the king's and nobility's baggage and field equipage, both when they take the field and when they return from it. They pitch and strike their tents with surprising facility and expedition; they load and conduct the mules and the baggage, and



The Harbor of London



## The sea of Tzana.

are formed into a body under proper officers, but never suffered, nor do they choose to fight on either side.

It was the 4th of April 1770, at eight o'clock in the morning, when Mr. Bruce and his party set out from Gondar. They passed the Kahha, and the Mahometan town, and about ten in the morning, came to a considerable river called Mogetch which runs in a deep rugged bed of flaky blue stones. They crossed it upon a very solid good bridge of four arches, a convenience seldom to be met with in passing Abyssinian rivers; but very necessary on this; as, contrary to most of their streams which become dry; or stand in pools, on the approach of the sun, the Mogetch runs constantly by reason that its sources are in the highest hills of Woggora, where clouds break plentifully at all seasons of the year. The water of this river is not wholesome, probably from the minerals, or stony particles it carries along with it, and the slaty strata over which it runs.

They now entered a very extensive plain, bounded on the east side by the mountains, and on the west by the large lake of Dembea, otherwise called the lake Tzana, or Bahar Tzana, the Sea of Tzana. At two they halted at Correva, a small village, beautifully situated on a gentle rising ground, through which the road passes in view of the lake, and then again divides, one branch continuing south to Emfras, and so on to Foggora and Dara; the other to Mitraha, two small islands on the lake, lying S. W. from the distance of about four hours' journey. The road from Correva to Emfras, for the first hour, is all in the plain; for the second, along the gentle slope of a mountain of no considerable height; and the remainder is upon a perfect flat, or along the lake Tzana.

At five in the morning of April 5, they left their station, and continued their road chiefly to the south, through the same sort of country, till they came to the foot of a hill, covered with bushes and thorny

## Tangouri—Emfras.

trees, chiefly the common acacia, but of no size, and seeming not to thrive. Here Mr. Bruce pitched his tent to search what the cover would produce. There were a great number of hares, which he could not make any use of, the Abyssinians holding them in abhorrence, as thinking them unclean; but to make amends he found great store of Guinea fowls of the common grey kind in Europe, of which he shot, in a little time, above a score; and these, being perfectly lawful food, proved a very agreeable variety from the raw beef, butter, and honey, which they had lived upon hitherto, and which was to be their diet till they reached Emfras.

Mr. Bruce next passed through Tangouri, a considerable village, chiefly inhabited by Mahometans, whose occupation is to go in caravans far to the south, on the other side of the Nile, through the several districts of Galla, to whom they carry beads and large needles, cohol, or stibium, myrrh, coarse cloth made in Begemder, and pieces of blue cotton cloths from Surat, called Marowti. They are generally near a year absent, and bring in return slaves, civet, wax, hides, and cardamum in large beautiful pods; they bring likewise a great quantity of ginger, but that is from farther south, nearer Narea. On the left of Tangouri, divided from it by a plain of about a mile in breadth, stands a high rock called Amba Mariam, with a church upon the very summit of it. There is no possibility of climbing this rock but at one place, and there it is very difficult and rugged; hither the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages retreat upon a sudden alarm or inroad of an enemy.

After passing a plain, with the lake Tzana all the way on their right, in length about three miles, they came to the banks of the river Gorno, a small but clear stream; it rises near Wechne, and has a bridge of one arch over it about half a mile above the ford. A mile farther they arrived at Emfras, situated on a steep hill; and the way up to it is almost perpendicular like the ascent of a ladder. The houses are all  
placed

## Description of the lake of Tzana.

placed about the middle of the hill fronting the west, in number about 300. Above these houses are gardens, or rather fields, full of trees and bushes, without any sort of order up to the very top. Emfras commands a view of the whole lake, and part of the country on the other side. It was once a royal residence. On a small hill is a house of Hatzé Hannes, in form of a square tower, now going fast to ruin.

The lake of Tzana is by much the largest expanse of water known in that country. Its extent, however, has been greatly exaggerated. Its greatest length, from north to south, is forty-nine miles, and its utmost breadth thirty-five; but it decreases greatly at each end, where it is in some places not more than ten miles broad. In the dry months from October to March, it shrinks greatly in size; but after that all those rivers which are on every side of it are full, and fall into the lake; then it swells, and extends itself into the plain country, and has of course a much larger surface.

According to the Abyssinians, who, however, are very great liars, this lake contains 45 inhabited islands. Mr. Bruce judged their number to be about eleven; the principal of which is Dek, or Daka, situated nearly in the middle. These islands were formerly used as prisons for the great, or served them for a voluntary retreat on account of some disgust or misfortune, or as places of security for valuable effects in troublesome times. While Mr. Bruce was in Abyssinia, 1300 ounces of gold, confided by the queen to the care of Welleta Christos, her Governor of Dek, a man of extraordinary sanctity, who had fasted forty years, was stolen away by that priest, who absconded with his booty; yet the queen would never suffer him to be sought or apprehended.

On the 12th of May they heard the king had marched to Tedda, and on the 13th, by day-break, Netcho, Fit-Auraris to Ras Michael, passed in great haste below the town towards Foggora. The king had made a forced march from Tedda, and was

Arno—Langué.

that night to encamp at a house of Gusho's, near Langué. This was great expedition, and sufficiently marked the eagerness with which it was undertaken. The effects of the approach of the army were soon seen. Every one hid what was best in his house, or fled to the mountains with it.

About eleven o'clock in the morning the king's Fit-Auraris passed. With him Mr. Bruce had contracted a great degree of friendship; he had about 50 horse and 200 foot: as he passed at several places he made proclamation in the name of the king, 'That nobody should leave their houses, but remain quiet in them without fear, and that every house found empty should be burnt.' He sent a servant as he passed, telling our traveller the king was that night to lie at Langué, and desiring him to send what spirits he could spare, which Mr. Bruce accordingly did, upon his providing a man who could protect the houses adjoining his from the robbery and the violence of which the inhabitants were in hourly fear. About the close of the evening they heard the king's kettle-drums. Forty-five of these instruments constantly go before him, beating all the way while he is on his march. The Mahometan town near the water was plundered in a minute; but the inhabitants had long before removed every thing valuable.

On the 14th at day-break, Mr. Bruce mounted his horse, with all his men-servants, leaving the women-servants and an old man to take care of the house. They crossed the river Arno, a little below Emfras, before they got into the plain; after which they went at a smart gallop, and arrived at Langué between eight and nine o'clock. Early as it was, the king was then in council, and Ras Michael, who had his advisers assembled also in his tent, had just left it to go to the king's. There was about 500 yards between their tents, and a free avenue is constantly left, in which it is a crime to stand, or even to cross, unless for messengers sent from one to the other. The old  
general



---

---

Mr. Bruce's interview with Ozoro Esther.

---

---

general dismounted at the door of the tent; and though Mr. Bruce saw that he perceived him, and was always at other times most courteous, he now passed him without taking the least notice, and entered the tent of the king.

Although our traveller's place in the household gave him free access to the king, he did not choose at that time to enter the back tent, and place himself behind his chair, as he might have done; he rather thought it better to go to the tent of Ozoro Esther, where he was sure at least of getting a good breakfast; nor was he disappointed. As soon as he shewed himself at the door of the tent of that princess, who was lying upon a sofa, the moment she cast her eyes upon him, she cried out, "There is Yagoube! there is the man I wanted!" The tent was cleared of all but her women, and she then began to enumerate several complaints which she thought, before the end of the campaign, would carry her to her grave. She was then pregnant; and the late festival, upon her niece's marriage with Powussen of Begemder, had been much too hard for her constitution, always weak and delicate since her first misfortunes, and the death of Mariam Barea. After giving her his advice, and directing her women how to administer what he was to send her, the doors of the tent were thrown open: all his friends came flocking round them, and he presently saw, that the interval employed in consultation had not been spent uselessly, for a most abundant breakfast was produced in wooden platters upon the carpet. There were excellent stewed fowls, but so inflamed with Cayenne pepper as almost to blister the mouth; fowls dressed with boiled wheat, just once broken in the middle, in the manner they are prepared in India, with rice called *pillaw*; this, too, abundantly charged with pepper; Guinea hens, roasted hard without butter, or any sort of sauce, very white; but as tough as leather: above all, the never-failing *brind*, for so they call the collops of raw beef,

without which nobody could have been satisfied; but, what was more agreeable to our traveller, a large quantity of wheat-bread, of Dembea flour, equal in all its qualities to the best in London or Paris.

After the repast the glass went cheerfully about. There was excellent red wine, but strong good new brandy, honey-wine or hydromel, and a species of beer called bouza, both fermented with herbs or the leaves of trees, and made very heady. The kind landlady pressed the glass about in the briskest manner, reminding her guests that the time was short, and that the drum would presently give the signal for striking the tents. This representation operated with Mr. Bruce in a way contrary to her intentions: for he began to fear that he should not be able to go home, and he was not prepared to proceed with the army: besides it was indispensably necessary for him to see both the king and Ras Michael. He therefore apologized to Ozoro Esther, and left the company to wait upon the king.

On the 15th, the king decamped early in the morning, and led the van in person. He halted at the river Gomara, but advanced that same night to the passage where the Nile comes out of the lake Tzana, and resumes again the appearance of a river. Here he remained encamped the 15th and 16th.

On the 17th, after sun-rise, the king passed the Nile, and encamped at a small village on the other side, called Tsoomwa, where his Fit-Auraris had taken post early in the morning. The Fit-Auraris, which literally signifies front of the army, is an officer depending immediately upon the commander-in-chief, corresponding directly with him, and receiving orders from him alone. He is always one of the bravest, most robust, and most experienced men in the service; he knows with the utmost accuracy the distance of places, the depth of rivers, the state of the fords, the thickness of the woods, and the extent of them; in a word, the whole face of the country in detail. His party

## Derdera—Waito.

party is always adapted to the country in which the war is carried on ; he is not limited to any number of troops, but in time of real danger he has generally about 300, picked at his pleasure from the whole army. These consist sometimes entirely of horse, at others of foot, but commonly of a mixture of both. This officer has also the management of the intelligence, and the direction of the spies.

From Tsoomwa the king marched on, a short day's march, to Derdera, and encamped near the church of St. Michael. Derdera was a collection of small villages between the lake Dembea and Courtohha, where the agreement was that the confederates should inclose Michael, and give him battle ; but he had now lost all patience, as there was no appearance of either Gusho or Powussen ; and, being besides in an enemy's country, he began to proceed in his usual manner, by giving orders to lay waste the adjacent territory with fire and sword. The whole line of march, two days' journey in breadth from the lake, was set on fire ; the people who could not escape were slain, and every wanton barbarity permitted.

The king's passage of the Nile was the signal given for Mr. Bruce to set out to join him. It was the 18th of May, at noon, that he left Emfras with his attendants, his course being southward whilst in the plain of Mitraha. They soon began to coast close along the side of the lake Tzana : where they saw a great number of hippopotami ; some swimming in the lake at a small distance, some rising from feeding on the high grass in the meadows, and walking seemingly at great leisure till they plunged out of sight. They are exceedingly cautious and shy while on land, and not to be approached near enough to do execution with the best rifle-gun. The following morning they came to the river Reb, which falls into the lake a little to the north-west of the place where they now were. Close to the spot where the Reb joins the lake is a small village of Pagans, called Waito, who live quite separate from the Abyssinians,  
and

---

The manners of the inhabitants of Waito.

---

and are held by them in utter abhorrence, so that to touch them, or any thing that belongs to them, makes a man unclean all that day till the evening, separates him from his family and friends, and excludes him from the church and all divine service, till he is washed and purified on the following day. Part of this aversion is certainly owing to their manner of feeding, for the only profession of these people is killing the crocodile and hippopotamus, which they make their daily sustenance. They have a most abominable stench, are exceedingly wan, very lean, and many of them, as it is said, die of the lousy disease.

On the 20th, between six and seven in the morning, Mr. Bruce sent the baggage and tents that they had with them forward with Strates, a Greek, who was an avowed enemy to all learned inquiries or botanical researches. His orders were to encamp at Dara, in some convenient place near the house of Negade Ras Mahomet. In the mean time Mr. Bruce staid expecting the arrival of Ayto Adigo Shum, or Governor of Karoota; he came near eleven o'clock. As a temporary shelter from the sun, a cloak upon cross sticks was set up, instead of a tent, to save time. They sat down together to such fair as Adigo had brought along with him; it was a soldier's dinner, coarse and plentiful.

Netcho, a near relation of the old queen, arrived from Kuara just as they were sitting down to dinner. He had about 50 horse and 200 foot, all bad troops, and ill armed; he was, however, a respectable tried veteran, who having had many opportunities of becoming rich, gave the whole to his soldiers, and those of his dependants who lived with him: on which account he was extremely beloved.

The mules that had hitherto carried our traveller's quadrant and telescopes being bad, he had luckily kept them behind, in hopes that either Adigo or Netcho would supply him with better; and he had now placed them upon fresh mules which he had obtained,  
and

---

Confederation of Gusho, Powussen, and Fasil, against the Ras.

---

and had not sent them on with the servants, and they were then taking a friendly glass. It was about noon, when they saw their servants coming back, Strates also among the rest, stript of every thing that he had, except a cotton night-cap, which he wore on his head. The servants swam over the Gomara immediately, nor was Strates interrupted, but passed at the ford. They said that Gusho and Powussen were in rebellion against the king, and confederated with Fasil: that they were advancing fast to cut off the Ras's retreat to Gondar, and that Guebra Mehedin, and Confu, Powussen's Fit-Auraris, had fallen in with the servants; and plundered them, as belonging to the king and the Ras.

While they were making their comments upon this bad news, the parties appeared. They had, perhaps, an hundred horse, and were scattered about a large plain, skirmishing, playing, pursuing one another, shrieking and hooping like so many frantic people. They stopped, however, upon coming nearer, seeing the respectable figure made by Mr. Bruce's party, just ready to pass the ford, which alone divided them.

Guebra Mehedin and his brother approached nearer to the banks than the rest; they sent a servant who crossed the river to them, upbraiding Ayto Adigo with protecting a Frank, proscribed by the laws of their country, and also of marching to the assistance of Ras Michael, the murderer of his sovereign, offering at the same time to divide the spoil with him, if he would surrender Mr. Bruce and his followers to him. Servants here, who carry messages in time of war between the contending parties, are held sacred like heralds. Adigo and Netcho were above observing this punctilio with robbers. Some were for cutting the servant's ears off, and some for carrying him bound to Ras Michael; but Mr. Bruce begged they would let him go. The servants having given the messenger a severe drubbing with sticks, torn the cloth from about his middle, and twisted it about his neck like a

---

The travellers arrive at Dara.

---

cord, sent him back in that plight to Guebra Mehedin, and they all prepared to take the ford across the river. Guebra Mehedin, who saw his servant thus disgraced returning towards him, and a considerable motion among the troops, advanced a few steps with two or three more of his company, stretching forth his hand and crying out, but still at such a distance that they could not hear what he said. He was distinguished by a red sash of silk twisted about his head. Mr. Bruce, with his servants and attendants, first passed the river at the ford, and he had no sooner got up the bank, and stood upon firm ground than he fired two shots at him; the one, from a Turkish rifle, seemed to give him great apprehensions, or else to have wounded him, for after four or five of his people had flocked about him, they all galloped off across the plain of Foggora towards Lebec.

Netcho had passed the Gomarara close after Mr. Bruce, crying to him to let him go first; but Adigo, who hated Michael, and was a friend of the rebel chiefs, declared his resolution to go no farther. He therefore returned to Emfras and Karoota, and with him Mr. Bruce sent five of his servants, desiring him to escort his quadrant, clock, and telescopes, into the island of Mitraha, and deliver them to Tecla Georgis, the king's servant, governor of that island. Adigo, being left alone by the servants, could not be persuaded but some great treasure was hidden in those boxes. He therefore carried them to his house, and used the servants well; but opened and examined every one of the packages. Surprised to find nothing but iron and rusty brass, he closed them again, and delivered them safely to Tecla Georgis, there to be kept for that campaign.

Our travellers now set out to take up their residence with Negade Ras Mahomet at Dara, where they arrived in the afternoon, having picked up one of their mules in the way, with a couple of carpets and some kitchen furniture upon it, all the rest being carried off.

A son

## Mariam Ohha.

A son of Negade Ras Mahomet arrived, who assured them all was in peace; that they had been expecting them, and Ayto Adigo with them; that he heard nothing of Guebra Mehedin, only that he had retreated with great precipitation homewards across the plain, as they apprehended, from fear of the approach of their party.

This brought them to Negade Ras Mahomet's house who killed a cow for Netcho, or rather allowed him to kill one for himself; for it is equal to a renunciation of Christianity, to eat meat when the beast is slaughtered by a Mahometan. Strates, who was not so scrupulous, had a very hearty supper privately with Negade Ras Mahomet and his family. As for our traveller, being full of thoughts upon difficulties and dangers he was already engaged in, he had no stomach for either of their suppers, but ordered some coffee, and went to bed, having first settled with his landlord the plan of an excursion to the cataract of Alata. Wearied with thinking, and better reconciled to his expedition by the information which he had received from Mahomet, he fell into a sound sleep. He was awakened by Strates in the morning, (the 21st of May,) and after coffee, mounted his horse, with five servants, on horseback, all resolute active young fellows, armed with lances in the fashion of their country. Mr. Bruce was joined that moment by a son of Mahomet, on a good horse, armed with a short gun, and pistols at his belt, with four of his servants, Mahometans, stout men, each having his gun, and pistols at his girdle, and a sword hung over his shoulder, mounted upon four good mules, swifter and stronger than ordinary horses. They galloped all the way, and were out of sight in a short time. They then pursued their journey with diligence, but not in a hurry. After passing the plain, they came to a brisk stream which rises in Begemder, passes Alata, and throws itself into the Nile below the cataract. They said, it was called Mariam Ohha; and a little farther,

---

---

The cataract of Alata.

---

---

ther, on the side of a green hill, having the rock appearing in some parts of it, stands Alata, a considerable village, with several smaller to the south and west. Mahomet, their guide, rode immediately up to the house where he knew the governor, or Shum, resided, for fear of alarming him; but they had already been seen at a considerable distance, and Mahomet and his servants known. All the people of the village surrounded the mules directly, paying their compliments to the master and the servants; the same was immediately observed towards our travellers; and, as Mr. Bruce saluted the Shum in Arabic, his own language, they speedily became acquainted. Having overshot the cataract, the noise of which they had a long time distinctly heard, Mr. Bruce resisted every entreaty to enter the house to refresh himself.

Their horses were immediately fed; bread, honey, and butter, served; after which they proceeded to the cataract. The first thing they saw was the bridge, which consists of one arch, about twenty-five feet broad, the extremities of which were strongly let into, and rested on the solid rock on both sides; but fragments of the parapets remained, and the bridge itself seemed to bear the appearance of frequent repairs, and many attempts to ruin it; otherwise in its construction it was exceedingly commodious. The Nile here is confined between two rocks, and runs in a deep trough, with great roaring and impetuous velocity. They were told that no crocodiles were ever seen so high, and were obliged to remount the stream above half a mile before they came to the cataract, through trees and bushes of the same beautiful and delightful appearance with those they had seen near Dara.

The cataract itself presents a most magnificent sight. The height has been rather exaggerated. The missionaries say the fall is about sixteen ells, or fifty feet. The measuring is, indeed, very difficult; but, by the position of long sticks, and poles of different







---

---

The cataract of Alata.

---

---

ferent lengths, at different heights of the rock, from the water's edge, Mr. Bruce judged it to be nearer forty feet than any other measure. The river had been considerably increased by rains, and fell in one sheet of water, without any interval, above half an English mile in breadth, with a force and noise that was truly terrible, and which stunned and made him for a time perfectly dizzy. A thick fume, or haze, covered the fall all round, and hung over the course of the stream both above and below, marking its track, though the water was not seen. The river, though swelled with rain, preserved its natural clearness, and fell into a deep pool or bason, in the solid rock which was full, and in twenty different eddies to the very foot of the precipice, the stream when it fell seeming part of it to run back with great fury upon the rock, as well as forward in the line of its course, raising a wave, or violent ebullition, by chafing against each other.

Jerome Lobo pretends, that he has sat under the curve, or arch, made by the projectile force of the water rushing over the precipice. He says he sat calmly at the foot of it, and looking through the curve of the stream, as it was falling, saw a number of rainbows of inconceivable beauty in this extraordinary prism. This however Mr. Bruce, without hesitation, avers to be a downright falsehood. A deep pool of water reaches to the very foot of the rock, and is in perpetual agitation. Now, allowing that there was a seat or bench, which there is not, in the middle of the pool, it is absolutely impossible, by any exertion of human strength, to have arrived at it. Although a very robust man, in the prime and vigour of life, and a hardy, practised, indefatigable swimmer, Mr. Bruce is perfectly confident he could not have got to that seat from the shore through the quietest part of that bason. It was a most magnificent sight, that ages, added to the greatest length of human life, would not deface or eradicate from Mr. Bruce's

---

The travellers return to Dara ;

---

Bruce's memory ; it struck him with a kind of stupor and a total oblivion of where he was, and of every other sublunary concern. It was one of the most magnificent stupendous sights in the creation, though degraded and vilified by the lies of a grovelling fanatic peasant.

In the evening the party returned to Dara. At supper Mr. Bruce questioned Strates respecting his adventure with Guebra Mehedin. Strates having given a circumstantial account of the manner in which he had been plundered and beaten, concluded with observing : "We shall see what figure he will make one of these days before the Iteghé, or what is better, before Ras Michael."—"That you never shall," said Negade Ras Mahomet, who had just then entered the room, "for there is a man now without who informs us that Guebra Mehedin is either dead or dying. A shot fired at him by one of you at the Gomara cut off part of his cheek-bone : the next morning he heard that Kasmati Ayabdar was going to the hot waters at Lebec with servants only, and the devil to whom he belonged would not quit him. He would persist, ill as he was, to attack Ayabdar, who, being unknown to him accompanied by a number of stout fellows, without difficulty cut his servants in pieces. In the fray Tecla Georgis, a servant of Ayabdar, coming up with Guebra Mehedin himself, struck him over the skull with a large crooked knife like a hatchet, and left him mortally wounded on the field, whence he was carried to a church, where he now lies a miserable spectacle, and can never recover." Strates could restrain himself no longer. He got up, and danced as if he had been frantic ; sometimes singing Greek songs, at others pronouncing ten thousand curses which he wished might overtake Guebra Mehedin in the other world. But Mr. Bruce was very far from sharing these sentiments, especially when he considered the relationship between the unfortunate man and the Iteghé.

---

and soon after arrive at Tsoomwa.

---

On the 22d Mr. Bruce and his attendants were all equally desirous to resume their journey. They set out accordingly at six o'clock in the morning, ascended some hills covered with trees and shrubs of inexpressible beauty, and many of extraordinary fragrance. They continued ascending about three miles, till they came to the top of the ridge within sight of the lake. As they rose, the hills became more bare and less beautiful. They afterwards descended towards the passage, partly over steep banks which had been covered with bushes, all trodden down by the army, and which had made the access to the river exceedingly slippery. Here they saw the use of Mahomet's servants, three of whom, each with a lance in one hand, holding that of his companion in the other, waded across the violent stream, sounding with the end of their lances every step they took. The river was very deep, the current about fifty yards broader than it was at the cataract; but the banks were, for a great way on each side, almost perfectly level, though much obstructed with black stones. In the middle it was very deep, and the stream smooth; so that it was apparent their horses must swim. Mr. Bruce not liking the smooth stones at the bottom, as a fall there would be irrecoverable; and as his horse was shod with iron, which is not usual in Abyssinia, swam to the other side, much comforted by the assurance that no crocodile passed the cataract. The beasts having got over, the men followed much quicker; many women, going to join the army, swam over, holding the tails of the horses, and they were all on the other side before twelve o'clock, the beasts a good deal tired with the passage, the steepness of the access to it, and the still greater depth on the other side. It was a little past three o'clock when they arrived at Tsoomwa, which was very fortunate, as they had scarcely pitched their tents before a most terrible storm of rain, wind, and thunder, overtook them. From the passage to  
Tsoomwa

## Karcagna.

Tsoomwa, all the country was forsaken; the houses uninhabited, the grass trodden down, and the fields without cattle.

On the 24th, at their ordinary time, when the sun began to be hot, they continued their route due south, through a very plain flat country, which, by the constant rains that now fell, began to stand in large pools, and threatened to turn all into a lake. An awful silence reigned every where around, interrupted only at times by thunder, now become daily, and the rolling of torrents produced by local showers in the hills, which ceased with the rain, and were but the children of an hour.

At Derdera they saw the church of St. Michael, the only building which, in favour of his own name, the Ras had spared. It served them for a very convenient lodging, as much rain had fallen in the night, and the priests had all fled or been murdered. They had this evening, when it was clear, seen the mountain of Samseen. Their next stage from Derdera was Karcagna, a small village near the banks of the Jemma, about two miles from Samseen. They knew the king had resolved to burn it, and they expected to have seen the clouds of smoke arising from its ruins; but all was perfectly cool and clear, and this very much surprised them. As they advanced, they had seen a great number of dead mules and horses, and the hyænas so bold as only to leave the carcase for a moment, and snarl as if they had regretted at seeing any pass alive.

After Mr. Bruce had passed the Nile, he found himself more than ordinarily depressed; his spirits were sunk almost to a degree of despondency, and yet nothing had happened since that period more than was expected before. This disagreeable situation of mind continued at night while he was in bed. The rashness and imprudence with which he had engaged himself in so many dangers without any necessity for so doing; the little prospect of his being ever

## The plain of Maitsha.

ever able to extricate himself out of them, or even if he lost his life, of the account being conveyed to his friends at home; the great and unreasonable presumption which had led him to think that, after every one that had attempted this voyage had miscarried in it, he was the only person that was to succeed: all these reflections upon his mind, when relaxed, dozing, and half oppressed with sleep, filled his imagination with what he had heard other people call the *horrors*,\* the most disagreeable sensation he ever was conscious of, and which he then felt for the first time. Impatient of suffering any longer, he leaped out of bed, and went to the door of the tent where the outward air perfectly awakened him, and restored his strength and courage. All was still, and at a distance he saw several bright fires. It was then near four in the morning of the 25th. He called up his companions, as he was desirous, if possible, to join the king that day. They accordingly were three or four miles from Derdera when the sun rose; there had been little rain that night, and they found very few torrents on their way; but it was slippery, and uneasy walking, the rich soil being trodden into a consistence like paste. About seven o'clock they entered upon the broad plain of Maitsha, and were fast leaving the lake. Here the country is, at least a great part of it, in tillage; and had been, in appearance, covered with plentiful crops; but all was cut down by the army for the horses, or trodden under foot, from carelessness or vengeance, so that a green blade could scarcely be seen. A little before nine they heard a gun fired that gave them some joy, as the army seemed not to be far off; a few minutes after, they heard several dropping shot, and, in less than a quarter of an hour's time, a general firing began from right to left, which ceased for an instant;

13.

2 P

and

\* Mr. Bruce means, I suppose, that he felt himself under the impression of what we call the *Night Mare*.

---

The contending armies come in sight of each other.

---

and then was heard again as smart as ever, about the occasion of which they were divided in opinion. The firing continued much in the same way, rather slacker, but apparently advancing nearer them; a sure sign that their army was beaten and retreating. They therefore made themselves ready, and mounted on horseback that they might join them.

They had not gone far in the plain before they had a sight of the enemy, to their very great surprise and no small comfort. A multitude of deer, buffaloes, boars, and various other wild beasts, had been alarmed by the noise and daily advancing of the army, and gradually driven before them. The country was all overgrown with wild oats, a great many of the villages having been burnt the year before the inhabitants had abandoned them; in this shelter the wild beasts had taken up their abodes in very great numbers. When the army pointed towards Karcagna to the left, the silence and solitude on the opposite side made them turn to the right to where the Nile makes a semicircle, the Jemma being behind them, and much overflowed. When the army, therefore, instead of marching south and by east towards Sunseen, had directed their course northwest, they had fallen in with these innumerable herds of deer and other beasts, who, confined between the Nile, the Jemma, and the lake, had no way to return but that by which they had come. These animals, finding men in every direction in which they attempted to pass, became desperate with fear, and, not knowing what course to take, fell a prey to the troops. The soldiers, happy in an occasion of procuring animal food, presently fell to firing wherever the beasts appeared; every loaded gun was discharged upon them, and this continued for very near an hour.

The king and Ras Michael were in the most violent agitation of mind: though the cause was before their eyes, yet the word went about that Woodage  
Asahel



## Great activity of Woodage Asahel.

Asahel had attacked the army ; and this occasioned a great panic and disorder, for every body was convinced with reason that he was not far off. The firing, however, continued ; the balls flew about in every direction, some few were killed, and many people and horses were hurt ; still they fired, and Ras Michael, at the door of his tent, crying, threatening, and tearing his grey locks, found, for a few minutes, the army was not under his command. At this instant Kasmati Netcho, whose Fit-Auraris had fallen back on his front, ordered his kettle drums to be beat before he arrived in the king's presence ; and this being heard, without being known generally who they were, occasioned another panic. The king ordered his tert to be pitched, his standard to be set up, his drums to beat, (the signal for encamping,) and the firing immediately ceased. But it was a long while before all the army could believe that Woodage Asahel had not been engaged with some part of it that day. This man was the most active and enterprising partizan of his time, and had an invincible hatred to Ras Michael ; nor was there any love lost between them. It is impossible to conceive with what velocity he moved, sometimes with 200 horse, sometimes with only half that number. He was constantly falling upon some part of Michael's army, whether marching or encamped ; and the blow once struck, he disappeared in a minute. When he was about to attempt something of importance he had only to summon his friends and acquaintance in the country, and he had then a little army, which dispersed when the business was accomplished. He was too tall for a good horseman, but had become very expert by constant practice. His face was yellow, as if he had the jaundice, and much pitted with the small-pox ; his eyes small, staring, and fiery ; his nose as it were broken ; his mouth large ; his chin long and turned up at the end ; he spoke very fast, and had a shy but ill-designing look. In his

---

Strates and Sebastos dangerously wounded.

---

character he was avaricious, treacherous, and cruel to a proverb; in short, he was allowed to be the most merciless robber and murderer the age had produced in all Abyssinia.

Mr. Bruce having left Kasmati Netcho was making his way towards the king's tent when he was met by a confidential servant of Kefla Yasons, who had that day commanded the rear in the retreat; a brave experienced officer, but mild, humane, intelligent, and affable. He sent to desire that Mr. Bruce would come to him alone, or send one of his Greek attendants. Having answered the enquiries which this man was directed to make, our traveller went in quest of his attendants Strates and Sebastos who had been sick on the road. He soon came up with them; and to his no small surprise, found them both extended on the ground. Strates was bleeding from a large wound in his forehead, crying out that his leg was broken, whilst he pressed it with both his hands below the knee seemingly regardless of the gash in his head. Sebastos said scarcely any thing, but sighed aloud. When Mr. Bruce enquired whether his arm was broken, he feebly answered that he was a dying man, and that his legs, his arms, and his ribs, were all broken to pieces. Mr. Bruce could not possibly conceive how this calamity had happened so suddenly; and what seemed still more strange, all around them were bursting out into loud fits of laughter. At length he learned that all this mischief was occasioned by Prince George who had frightened the mules.

This prince was fond of horsemanship, and rode with saddle, bridle, and stirrups, like the Arabs. The manner in which two of those people salute when they meet is this: the person inferior in rank or age presents his gun, charged with powder only, at the other, at the distance of 500 yards; he then, keeping his gun presented, gallops up as fast as he can, and on coming close, lowers the muzzle  
and

## History of this catastrophe.

and pours the explosion just under the other's stirrups or horse's belly. This they do sometimes twenty at once, so that you would think some of them at least could not possibly escape being bruised or burned. This exercise the prince had learned of Mr. Bruce, and was very expert in the performance of it. He had been out with his gun after the deer all the morning; and, hearing that our traveller had arrived, but seeing nobody but the two Greeks approaching on their mules, he came galloping furiously with his gun presented, and fired upon the ground under that which Strates rode; then wheeling as quick as lightning to the left he was out of sight in a moment. Never was compliment worse timed or relished. Strates had two panniers upon his mule containing two great earthen jars of hydromel. Sebastos had also some jars and pots, and three or four dozen of drinking-glasses; and both of them rode between the panniers upon the pack-saddles. Strates went first; and, to save trouble, the halter of the other mule was tied to his saddle, so that both the animals were fastened together. Strates's mule, on the firing of the gun so near it, being unaccustomed to compliments of this kind, started and threw him; it then trampled upon him, began to run off, and wound the halter round Sebastos, who likewise fell to the ground among some stones. Both the mules then began kicking at each other, till they had thrown off the panniers and pack-saddles, and broken every thing brittle in them. The mischief did not end here; for in struggling to get loose, they fell foul of the mule of old Azage Tecla Haimanout, one of the king's criminal judges, a very feeble old man, and broke his foot, so that he could not walk alone for several months.

As soon as Mr. Bruce had dressed the wounded, he repaired to Kefla Yasous, and after some conversation

---

Army of Ras Michael arrive at Mariam-Net.

---

sation enquired whither the army was marching? He said, that, as soon as the news of the conspiracy was known, a council was held, where it was the general opinion they should proceed briskly forward, and attack Fasil alone at Buré, then turn to Gondar to meet the other two; but learning upon the very best authority that great rain had fallen to the southward; that the rivers, which were so frequent in that part of the country, were mostly impassable, so that there would be great danger in meeting Fasil with an army spent and fatigued with the difficulty of the roads, it was, therefore, determined, and the Ras was decidedly of opinion, that they should keep their army entire for a better day, and immediately cross the Nile, and march back to Gondar; that they had accordingly wheeled about, and that day was the first of their proceeding, which had been interrupted by the accident of the firing. Mr. Bruce dined with Kefla Yasous. He then went to his own tent, where he found all that belonged to him had arrived safe; and having now procured clothes, he waited upon the king, and staid a considerable time with him.

On the 26th of May, early in the morning, the army marched towards the Nile. In the afternoon they encamped on the banks of the river Coga, the church Abbo being something more than half a mile to the north-west of them.

Next morning they left this river, marching down upon the Nile; they passed the church of Mariam-Net, as they call the church of St. Anne. Here the superior, attended by about fifty of his monks, came in procession to welcome Ras Michael; but he, it seems, had received some intelligence of ill-offices which the people of this quarter had done to the Agows, by Fasil's direction; he therefore ordered the church to be plundered, and took the superior, and two of the leading men of the monks, away  
with

---

Prodigious fall of rain by which the Nile is greatly swollen.

---

with him to Gondar; several of the others were killed and wounded, without provocation, by the soldiers, and the rest dispersed through the country. They arrived about four on the banks of the Nile, and took possession in a line of about 600 yards of ground.

From the time the army decamped from Coga it poured incessantly the most continued rain Mr. Bruce ever had yet seen; violent claps of thunder followed close one upon another, almost without interval, accompanied with sheets of lightning, which ran on the ground like water: the day was more than commonly dark, as in an eclipse; and every hollow, or foot-path, collected a quantity of rain, which fell into the Nile in torrents.

The Abyssinian armies pass the Nile at all seasons. It rolls with it no trees, stones, or impediments; yet the sight of such a monstrous mass of water terrified Mr. Bruce, and made him think the idea of crossing would be laid aside. The Greeks crowded around him all forlorn and despairing, cursing the hour they first entered the country, and following these curses with fervent prayers, where fear held the place of devotion. A cold and brisk gale now sprung up at N. W. with a clear sun; and soon after four, when the army arrived on the banks of the Nile, these temporary torrents were all subsided, the sun was hot, and the ground again beginning to come dry.

Netcho, Ras Michael's Fit-Auraris, with about 400 men, had passed in the morning, and taken his station above them in little huts like bee-hives. He had sent back word to the king, that his men had passed swimming, and with very great difficulty; that he doubted whether the horses or loaded mules, could cross at any rate; but, if it was resolved to make the trial, they should do it immediately, without staying till the increase of the river. He said both banks were composed of black earth, slippery and miry, which would become more so when horses had puddled it; he advised above all, the turning to the  
right

---

Ras Michael's army wade or swim across the Nile.

---

right immediately after coming ashore, in the direction in which he had fixed poles, as the earth was hard and firm, besides having the advantage of some round stones which hindered the beasts from slipping or sinking. Instead, therefore, of resting there that night, it was resolved that the horse should cross immediately. The first who passed was a young man, a relation of the king, brother to Ayamico, killed at the battle of Banja; he walked in with great caution, marking a track for the king to pass. He had gone upon rather solid ground, about twice the length of his horse, when he plunged out of his depth, and swam to the other side. The king followed him immediately with a great degree of haste, Ras Michael calling to him to proceed with caution, but without success. Afterwards came the old Ras, on his mule, with several of his friends swimming both with and without their horses on each side of him, in a manner truly wonderful. As soon as these were safely ashore, the king's household, and black troops, and Mr. Bruce with them, advanced cautiously into the river, and swam happily over, in a deep stream of reddish-coloured water, which ran without violence almost upon a level. Each horseman had a mule in his hand, which swam after him, or by his side, with his coat of mail and headpiece tied upon it. It is impossible to describe the confusion that followed; night was hard upon them, and, though it increased their loss, it in a great measure concealed it; a thousand men had not yet passed, though on mules and horses; many, mired in the muddy landing-place, fell back into the stream, and were carried away and drowned. Of the horse belonging to the king's household, one hundred and eighty in number, seven only were missing; with them Ayto Aylo, vice chamberlain to the queen, and Tecla Miriam the king's uncle, a great friend of Ras Michael's, both old men.

The ground on the west side was quite of another consistence than was that upon the east, it was firm,

---

Ayto Aylo and Tecla Mariam drowned in the Nile.

---

covered with short grass, and rose in small hills like the downs in England, all sloping into little valleys which carried off the water, the declivity being always towards the Nile. There was no baggage, the tent of the Ras and that of the king excepted, which had as yet come over, and these were wet, being drenched in the river. The Fit-Auraris had left, ready made, two rafts, for Ozoro Esther, and the other two ladies, with which she might have easily been conducted over, and without much danger; but the Ras had made her pass over in the same manner he had crossed himself, many swimming on each side of her mule. She would have fain staid on the east side, but it was in vain to remonstrate. She was pregnant, and had fainted several times; yet nothing could prevail with the Ras to trust her on the other bank till morning. She crossed, however, safely, though almost dead with fright. The night was cold and clear, and a strong wind at north-west had blown all the afternoon. The river had abated towards mid-night, when, whether from this cause, or, as they alledged, that they found a more favourable ford, all the Tigré infantry, and many mules lightly loaded, passed with less difficulty than any of the rest had done, and with them several loads of flour; luckily also Mr. Bruce's two tents and mules, to his great consolation, came safely over when it was near morning. Still the army continued to pass, and those that could swim seemed best off. Ayto Aylo, the queen's chamberlain, and Tecla Mariam, were drowned probably at the first attempt to pass, as they were never after heard of. Before day-light the van and the centre had all joined the king; the number that perished was never distinctly known, for those that were missing were thought to have remained on the other side with Kefla Yasous, at least for that day. It happened that the priests of the church of Mariam Net, had in the confusion been left chained arm to arm, in the rear, with Kefla Yasous. Terrified to death lest

---

Fasil's stratagem to destroy the Ras's army.

---

Michael should pull out their eyes, or exercise some of his usual cruelties upon them, which was certainly his intention in carrying them with him, they began to implore Kefla Yasous to procure their pardon and dismissal. They frankly informed him of their suspicions that Michael had been betrayed. They said they had never known of a ford there before. Though they had lived many years in the neighbourhood, neither had they ever heard of one at Kerr, the first cataract, which the guides had recommended as the best of the two; they, therefore, believed that Michael's guides had deceived him on purpose, and that they intended to do the same on the morrow, by inducing him to pass the river at Kerr. They told him farther that about three days before Michael arrived in the neighbourhood of Samseen, they had heard a nagareet beat regularly every evening at sun-set, behind the high woody hill in front, on which stood the church of Boskon Abbo; that they had also seen a man the day before, who had left Welleta Yasous, Fasil's principal officer and confidant at Goutto, waiting the arrival of more troops to pass the Nile there, whence they doubted not that some treachery was designed.

Kefla Yasous was thoroughly convinced that some snare had been laid by Fasil for the royal army; and encouraging the priests by assurances of reward instead of punishment, he enquired if they knew for certain of any better ford below. They replied that they knew of no ford but the common one of Delakas, about eight miles below; that, it was true, it was not good and deeper than usual, as the rainy season had begun early, but so perfectly fordable that it might safely be passed over even with loaded mules. They advised him, as the night was dry and the rain generally fell in the day, to lose no time, but to collect his troops, weary as they were, as speedily as possible, and to send the heavy baggage before; that there was no river or torrent in their way but Amlac Ohha, which



---

The whole plot laid open to the Ras by an Agow.

---

which at that time of night was at the lowest, and which they might then pass at their leisure, while he covered them behind; that in this case they might all be safely over the ford by the time the sun became hot in the morning, about which hour they had no doubt he would otherwise be attacked by Welleta Yasous.

Though all these circumstances had the strongest air of probability, yet the cautious general would not venture upon a step of so much consequence as the separation of the rear of the army from the king without farther enquiry. He had then in his camp two of the guides who had brought the army to this ford, and a servant of Nanna Georgis, who had arrived some days before with information. The two former who pretended to be Agows, consequently friends of the king, he called into his presence, and ordered them to be put in irons; and then sent for the latter, who immediately knew one of them to be his countryman, but declared that the other was a Galla, both servants of Fasil, and residing at Maitsha. Keffa Yasous immediately commanded the executioner of the camp to attend; and having exhorted them to declare the truth, for fear of what would speedily follow, and no satisfactory answer being given, he directed the eyes of the Galla to be plucked out. The man still continuing obstinate, he delivered him to the soldiers, who hewed him in pieces with their large knives before the face of his companion. The latter influenced by this spectacle, upon receiving a promise of life, liberty, and reward, declared that he had left Fasil behind a hill, which he shewed about three miles distant in front of the king's army, and had gone down to Welleta Yasous, who was waiting at Goutto ready to pass the Nile: that they were sent forward to decoy the king to that passage under the name of a ford, where they expected great part of the army to perish if they attempted to pass; that Fasil was to attack such part of the troops as

---

The Ras's army cross the Nile at Amlac Ohha.

---

should have passed, as soon as they appeared on the heights above the river, but not till, by the firing on the other side, he knew that Welleta Yasous was engaged with the rear: that they did not imagine Michael could have passed that night; but on the morrow he would certainly be attacked by Fasil, as another guide who had crossed with the Ras was to go directly to Fasil, and inform him of the state of the royal army.

Keffa Yasous sent two of his principal officers, with a distinct detail of this whole affair, to the king. It being now dark, they swam the river on horseback, with much more difficulty and danger than the others had done, and they found Ras Michael and the king in council, to whom they told their message with every circumstance; adding, that Keffa Yasous, as the only way to preserve the army, quite spent with fatigue, and encumbered with such a quantity of baggage, had struck his tent, and would, by that time, be on his march for the ford Delakus, which he should cross, and, after leaving a party to guard the baggage and sick, he should with the freshest of his men join the army. The spy that had passed with Michael and the king was now sought for; but he had lost no time, and was gone to Fasil at Boskon Abbo. Keffa Yasous, having seen all the baggage on the way before him, did, as his last act, perhaps not strictly consistent with justice, hang the poor unfortunate informer, the Agow, upon one of the trees at the ford, that Welleta Yasous, when he passed in the morning, might see how certainly his secret was discovered, and that consequently he was on his guard.

Keffa Yasous, who behaved in this business with consummate prudence, crossed Amlac Ohha with some degree of difficulty, on the 28th, and was obliged to abandon several baggage-mules. He advanced after this with as great diligence as possible to Delakus, and found the ford, though deep, much better

---

Slight skirmishing commenced by the two armies.

---

better than he expected. He had pitched his tent on the high road to Gondar, before Welleta Yasous knew that he had decamped, and at this passage he immediately advised Michael refreshing his troops for any emergency. About two in the afternoon Welleta Yasous appeared with his horse on the other side of the Nile, but it was then too late. Kefla Yasous was so strongly posted, and the banks of the river so guarded with fire-arms, down to the water-edge, that Fasil and all his army would not have dared to attempt the passage, or even approach the banks of the river.

As soon as Ras Michael received the intelligence, he dispatched the Fit-Auraris, Netcho, to take post upon the ford of the Kelti, a large river, but rather broad than deep, about three miles off. He himself followed early in the morning, and passed the Kelti just at sun-rise, without halting; he then advanced to meet Kefla Yasous, as the army began to want provisions, the little flour that had been brought over, or which the soldiers had taken with them, being nearly exhausted during that night and the morning after. It was found, too, that the men had but little powder, none of them having recruited their quantity since the hunting of the deer; but what they had was in perfect good order, being kept in horns and small wooden bottles, corked in such a manner as to be secured from water of any kind. Kefla Yasous, therefore, being in possession of the baggage, the powder and the provisions, a junction with him was absolutely necessary, and they expected to effect this at Wainadega, about twenty miles from their last night's quarters.

Between twelve and one they heard the Fit-Auraris engaged, and there was sharp firing on both sides, which soon ceased. Michael ordered his army immediately to halt; he and the king, and Billetana Gueta Tecla, commanded the van; Welleta Michael, and Ayto Tesfos of Siré, the rear. Having marched a  
little

---

Welleta Michael taken prisoner by Fasil.

---

little farther, he changed his order of battle. It was not long before the Fit-Auraris's two messengers arrived. Their account was, that they had fallen in with Fasil's Fit-Auraris; that they had attacked him smartly; and, though the enemy were greatly superior, being all horse, except a few musqueteers, had killed four of them. The Ras having first heard the message of the Fit-Auraris alone, he sent a man to report it to the king; and, immediately after this, he ordered two horsemen to go full gallop along the east side of the hill, the low road to Wainadega, to warn Kefla Yasous of Fasil's being near at hand; he likewise directed the Fit-Auraris to advance cautiously till he had seen Fasil, and to pursue no party that should retreat before him.

Fasil soon appeared at the top of the hill with about 3000 horse. It was a fine sight, but the evening was beginning to be overcast. After having taken a full view of the army, they all began to move slowly down the hill, beating their kettle-drums. Fasil sent down a party to skirmish with the cavalry that were advanced beyond the front of the royal army, and he himself halted after having made a few paces down the hill. The two bodies of horse met just half-way at two trees, and mingled together, as appeared at least, with very decisive intention; but whether it was by orders or from fear, (for they were not overmatched in numbers,) the Abyssinian horse turned their backs and came precipitately down, so that it was feared they would break in upon the foot. Several shots were fired at them from the centre by order of the Ras, who cried out aloud in derision, "Take away these horses and send them to the mill." They divided, however, to the right and left, into the two grassy valleys under cover of the musquetry, and a very few of Fasil's horse were carried in along with them, and slain by the soldiers on the side of the hill. On the king's side no man of note was missing but Welleta Michael,

---

---

Battle of Limjour.

---

---

chael, nephew of Ras Michael, whose horse falling, he was taken prisoner and carried off by Fasil.

The whole army advanced immediately at a very brisk pace, hooping and screaming, as is their custom, in a most harsh and barbarous manner, crying out: Hatze Ali! Michael Ali! But Fasil, who saw the forward countenance of the king's troops, and that a few minutes would lay him under the necessity of risking a battle, which he did not intend, withdrew his troops at a smart trot over the smooth downs, returning towards Boskon Abbo. This is what was called the battle of Limjour, from a village burnt by Ras Michael last campaign; the name of a battle is surely more than it deserves. The Ras, who saw that Fasil would not fight, easily penetrated his reasons, and no sooner was he gone, and his own drums silent, than he heard a nagareet beat, and knew it to be that of Keffa Yasous. This general encamped upon the river Avoley, leaving his tents and baggage under a proper guard, and had marched with the best and freshest of his troops to join Michael before the engagement. All was joy at meeting; every rank of men joined in extolling the merit and conduct of their leaders.

The army marched next day to Dingleber, a high hill, or rock, approaching so close to the lake as scarcely to leave a passage between. Upon the top of this rock is the king's house. As they arrived very early there, and were now out of Fasil's government, the king insisted upon treating Ras Michael and all the people of consideration. Just as the king sat down to dinner an accident happened that occasioned much trepidation among all his servants. A black eagle was chased into his tent by some of the birds of prey that hover about the camp; and it was afterwards in the mouth of every one that the king would be dethroned by a man of inferior birth and condition. Every body at that time looked to Fasil: the event proved the application false, though  
the

the omen was true. Powussen of Begemder was as low-born as Fasil, as great a traitor, but more successful, to whom the ominous presage pointed; and, though we cannot but look upon the whole as accident, it was but too soon fulfilled.

Two horsemen from Fasil, clad in habits of peace, and without arms, arrived at Dingleber in the evening of the 29th; they were known to be two of his principal servants, were grave, genteel, middle-aged men. They had an audience early after their coming, first of the Ras, then of the King. They said, and said truly, that Fasil had repassed the Kelti, was encamped on the opposite side, and was not yet joined by Welleta Yasous. Their errand was, to desire that the Ras might not fatigue his men by unnecessarily hurrying on to Gondar, because he might rest secured of receiving no further molestation from Fasil their master, as he was on his march to Buré. They told the Ras the whole of the conspiracy, as far as it regarded him, and the agreement that Powussen and Gusho had made with their master to surround him at Derdera. Fasil declared his resolution never again to appear in arms against the king, but that he would hold his government under him, and pay the accustomed taxes punctually: he promised also, that he would renounce all manner of connection with Gusho and Powussen, as he had already done, and he would take the field against them next season with his whole force, whenever the king ordered him. The messengers concluded, with desiring the Ras to give Fasil his grand-daughter, Welleta Selassé, in marriage, and that he would then come to Gondar without distrust.

The Ras, though he did not believe all this, made no difficulty in agreeing to every thing that was desired. He promised the grand-daughter; and, as an earnest of his believing the rest, the king's two nagareets were brought to the door of the tent, where it was proclaimed, "Fasil is governor of the Agow,

---

---

Encampment of the army on the Kahha.

---

---

Maitsha, Gojam, and Damot; prosperity to him, and long may he live a faithful servant to the king our master!"—This was an extraordinary revolution in so small a space of time. Fasil's messengers were magnificently clothed, and it was first intended they should have gone back to him; but, after reflection, another person was sent, these two chusing to go to Gondar with the king, to remain hostages for Fasil's word, and to bring back his investiture from thence to Buré. The whole camp abandoned itself to joy.

The 3d of June the army encamped on the river Kahha, under Gondar. Several of the great officers of state reached them at the Kemona; many others met them at Abba Samuel. Mr. Bruce did not perceive the news they brought increased the spirits either of the King or the Ras; the soldiers, however, were all contented, because they were at home; but the officers, who saw farther, wore very different countenances, especially those that were of Amhara. Indeed our traveller had very little reason to be pleased; for after having undergone a constant series of fatigues, dangers, and expenses, he was returned to Gondar disappointed of his views in arriving at the source of the Nile, without any other acquisition than a violent ague.

---

---

---

Wellela Yasous afflicted with a cancer.

---



---

## CHAPTER V.

---

Retreat of the King and his army to Tigré—Socinius, a new King, proclaimed at Gondar—The body of Joas, the late king, found—Second Journey to discover the Source of the Nile—Mr. Bruce's interviews with Fasil—Cataract of Assar—First Cataract of the Nile near Goutto—Mountains of the Moon—Roguary of Woldo, the guide—Sources of the Nile—Description of them—Geesh—Course of the Nile—Cause of its inundation—Transactions at Geesh—The Priest of the Nile—Account of the Agows; their manners, trade, character—Return to Gondar.

**T**HE king had heard that Gusho and Powussen with their partisans were ready to fall upon him in Gondar, as soon as the rains should have swelled the Tacazzé, so that the army could not retire into Tigré, and no doubt was entertained that the proclamation in favour of Fasil would hasten the motion of the rebels. As Mr. Bruce had never despaired of reaching the fountains of the Nile, so he never neglected to improve such means as held out the least probability of accomplishing that purpose. He had been very attentive and serviceable to Fasil's servants while in the camp. They had on the other-hand been very importunate with Mr. Bruce to prescribe something for what he understood to be a cancer in the lip, with which Wellela Yasous, Fasil's principal general, was afflicted. He complied with their desire; and, overjoyed at having succeeded so well in their commission, they declared before the king, that Fasil would be more pleased at receiving a medicine that would restore Wellela Yasous to health than with the magnificent appointments which his goodness had bestowed upon him. "If so," said our traveller addressing the king, "in this day of grace I will ask two favours. They



---

Ras Michael puts Mr. Bruce in possession of Geesh.

---

They are these:—You shall give me, and oblige Fasil to ratify the grant, the village of Geesh, and the source where the Nile rises, that I may thence be furnished with money for myself and servants; it shall stand me instead of Tangouri near Emfras, though not of equal value. The second is that when I shall see that it is in his power to carry me to Geesh, and shew me those sources, Fasil shall do it upon my request, without fee or reward, and without excuse or evasion." All present laughed at the easiness of the request, declaring that it was nothing, and wishing to do ten times as much. "Tell Fasil," said the king to the servants of that chief, "I give the village of Geesh, and those fountains he is so fond of, to Yagoube and his posterity for ever; never to appear under another name in the deftar, and never to be taken from him or exchanged, either in peace or war. Swear this to him in the name of your master." Upon this they took the two fore-fingers of Mr. Bruce's right hand, and each in succession laid the fore-fingers of his own right hand across them, and then kissed them—a form of swearing used in the country, at least among those who call themselves Christians. As the royal secretary and historian was then present, the king ordered him to enter the gift in the deftar or revenue book, where the taxes and revenue of the king's lands are registered.

Michael and his officers were meanwhile concerting future operations. They could not trust Fasil, who besides could render them no service in this emergency, as the rains had set in, and he was gone home. The western part of the kingdom was ready to rise upon them: Woggora to the north was all in arms, impatient to revenge the severities inflicted by Michael on his first march to Gondar. The Tacazzé, one of the largest and most rapid rivers of Abyssinia, separates Tigré from Woggora, and washes the foot of the lofty mountains of Samen. Though not the first to overflow, yet when swelled to its height it is

---

Mr. Bruce supposed to possess the gift of prophecy.

---

impassable by horse or foot, rolling down prodigious stones and trees with its current. Dangerous as this passage was, there seemed to be no chance of safety but in attempting it. Michael therefore, and every soldier under him, were of opinion, that if they must perish, it would be better to meet death in the river on the confines of their own country, than fall alive into the hands of their enemies in Amhara. For this preparations had been making night and day since Ras Michael entered Gondar.

The whole army was accordingly put in motion. Mr. Bruce had the evening before taken leave of the king in an interview which cost him more than almost any one in his life. The substance was, that he was ill in his health, and quite unprepared to attend the king into Tigré, to which place the army was to retreat; that his heart was set upon completing the only purpose of his coming into Abyssinia, without which he should return into his own country with disgrace; that he hoped, through his majesty's influence, Fasil might find some way for him to accomplish it; if not, he trusted soon to see him return, when he hoped it would be easy; but, if he then went to Tigré, he was fully persuaded he should never have the resolution to come again to Gondar.

The king seemed to take heart at the confidence with which Mr. Bruce spoke of his return. "You, Yagoube," said he, in a humble complaining tone, "could tell me, if you pleased, whether I shall or not, and what is to befall me; those instruments and those wheels, with which you are constantly looking at the stars, cannot be for any use, unless for prying into futurity."—"Indeed, prince," said Mr. Bruce, "these are things which we guide ships at sea, and by these we mark down the ways that we travel by land; teach them to people that never passed them before, and, being once traced, keep them by us to be known by all men for ever. But of the decrees of Providence, whether they regard you or myself, I

---

Mr. Bruce ascribes the army's preservation to Providence.

---

know no more than the mule upon which you ride.” —“ Tell me then, I pray, tell me, what is the reason you speak of my return as certain?” —“ I speak,” said Mr. Bruce, “ from observation, from reflections that I have made, much more certain than prophecies and divinations by stars. The first campaign of your reign at Fagitta, when you were relying upon the dispositions that the Ras had most ably and skilfully made, a drunkard, with a single shot, defeated a numerous army of your enemies. Powussen and Gusho were your friends, as you thought, when you marched our last, yet they had, at that very instant, made a league to destroy you at Derdera; and nothing but a miracle could have saved you, shut up between two lakes and three armies. It was neither you nor Michael that disordered their councils, and made them fail in what they had concerted. You were for burning Samseen, whilst Woodage Asahel was there in ambush with a large force, with a knowledge of all the fords, and master of all the inhabitants of the country. Remember how you passed those rivers, holding hand in hand, and drawing one another over. Could you have done this with an enemy behind you, and such an enemy as Woodage Asahel? He would have followed and harassed you till you took the ford at Goutto, and there was Welleta Yasous waiting to oppose you with 6000 men on the opposite bank. When Ras Michael marched by Mariam Net, he found the priests at their homes. Was that the case in any of the other churches we passed? No; all were fled for fear of Michael; yet these were more guilty than any by their connections with Fasil: notwithstanding which they alone, of all others, staid, though they knew not why; an invisible hand held them that they might operate your preservation. Nothing could have saved the army but the desperate passage of the Nile, so tremendous that will exceed the belief of man. Yet if the priests had crossed before this, not a man would have proceeded to the ford.

---

Mr. Bruce ascribes the army's preservation to Providence.

---

ford. The priests would have been Ras Michael's prisoners; and, on the other side, they never would have spoken a word whilst in the presence of Michael. Providence, therefore, kept them with Kefla Yasous; all was discovered, and the army saved by the retreat, and his speedy passing at the ford of Delakus. What would have happened to Kefla Yasous, had Fasil marched down to Delakus either before or after the passage? Kefla Yasous would have been cut off before Ras Michael had passed the Kelti; instead of which an unknown cause detained him, most infatuated-like, beating his kettle-drums behind Boskon Abbo, while our army under the Ras was swimming that dangerous river, and most of us passing the night, naked, without tents, provision, or powder. Nor did he ever think of presenting himself till we had warmed ourselves by an easy march in a fine day, when we were every day his superiors, and Kefla Yasous in his rear. From all these special marks of the favour of an overruling Providence, I do believe stedfastly that God will not leave his work half finished. He it is who, governing the whole universe, has yet reserved specially to himself the department of war; he it is who has styled himself the God of Battles."

The king was very much moved, and, as Mr. Bruce conceived, persuaded. He said, "O Yagoube, go but with me to Tigré, and I will do for you whatever you desire me."—"You do, Sir," said Mr. Bruce, "whatever I desire you, and more. I have told you my reasons why that cannot be; let me stay here a few months, and wait your return." The king then advised him to live entirely at Koscam with the Iteghé, without going out, unless Fasil came to Gondar, and to send punctually word how he was treated. Upon this they parted with inexpressible reluctance. He was a king worthy to reign over a better people; Mr. Bruce's heart was deeply penetrated with those marks of favour and condescension which  
he

---

---

Ras Michael's arrival at Tigré.

---

---

he had uniformly received from him ever since he entered his palace.

Two very remarkable things were said to have happened the night before Michael left the city. He had always pretended, that, before he undertook an expedition, a person, or spirit, appeared to him, who told him the issue and consequence of the measures he was then taking ; this he imagined to be St. Michael the archangel ; and he presumed very much upon this intercourse. In a council that night, where none but friends were present, he told them, that his spirit had appeared some nights before, and ordered him, in his retreat, to surprise the mountain of Wechné, and either slay or carry with him to Tigré the princes sequestered there. Nebrit Tecla, governor of Axum, with his two sons, all concerned in the late king's murder, were, it is said, strong advisers of this measure ; but Ras Michael, probably satiated with royal blood already, Kefla Yasous, and all the worthy men of any consequence, acting on principle, absolutely refused to consent to it. It was upon this the passage Belessen was substituted instead of the attempt on Wechné, and it was determined to conceal it. The other piece of advice, which, as the Ras said, this angel or rather devil gave him, was, that they should set fire to the town of Gondar, and burn it to the ground ; otherwise his good fortune would leave him there for ever. For this step there were a great number of advocates, and Michael seemed inclined to it himself ; but the king, when it was reported to him, put a direct negative upon it, declaring that he would rather stay in Gondar, and fall by the hands of his enemies, than either conquer or escape from them by the commission of so enormous a crime.

On Ras Michael's arrival in Tigré he found a rebellion prevailing in two different districts of that province. At the head of one of these parties of insurgents was Netcho, who had married Michael's daughter, and was now joined by Zamenfus Kedus, a man  
of

---

*Detection of the assassin of king Joas.*

---

of great property in that and the adjacent country. They had taken possession of the mountain of Aromata or Haramat, an ancient strong hold of Netcho's fathers, of which Michael had made himself master, while yet a young man after a siege of fifteen years. It was garrisoned by veteran troops, and seemed to promise employment for a long time to the Ras, who immediately prepared to invest it a second time.

Soon after the king and Ras Michael left the city, Gusho and Powussen entered. Their will was a law while they remained in Gondar. They treated Mr. Bruce with less kindness than the king and his friends had done, but not with that severity which might have been expected from this attachment to the latter.

In the beginning of August the queen went to Gondar, and was present at the deliberations of the principal officers who had been left there on the subject of choosing a new king. On her return the same night to Koscam, Sanuda, her nephew, summoned a council, and fixed upon Welleta Girgis, a young man, who had been reputed the son of Yasous, a former monarch of Abyssinia, but whose low life and manners had ensured his safety and liberty by the contempt which they had raised in Ras Michael. He assumed the name of Socinios; and, repairing to Koscam, threw himself at the feet of the Iteghé, begging her to return to Gondar, where she should still be considered as the regent of the kingdom.

Soon after this event accident led to the discovery of the assassin of king Joas, the predecessor of Tecla Haimanout, who had been murdered at the instigation of Ras Michael. A summary punishment was inflicted on the culprit, and the body of his victim was raised from the grave, or rather hole in the church-yard of St. Raphael, into which it had been thrown with the clothes on. It was laid in the church upon a little straw; the features were easily distinguishable, but some animal had eaten part of the cheek.

---

The inhabitants of Za Mensus put to the sword.

---

cheek. Here it remained for some time indecently exposed, till Mr. Bruce ventured to cover it in a becoming manner; an action which was generally praised by all parties. About the beginning of October two servants came from the king with a message to the queen, which, though laconic, was very easily understood: "Bury your boy, now you have got him; or when I come I will bury him, and some of his relations with him." This menace had the desired effect and Joas was privately interred.

Though the queen shewed great dislike to Mr. Bruce's attempting his intended journey at such a time, yet she did not positively command the contrary; he was prepared, therefore to leave Gondar the 27th of October 1770, and thought to get a few miles clear of the town, and then make a long stretch the next day. He had received his quadrant, time-keeper, and telescopes from the island of Mitraba, where he had placed them after the affair of Guebra Mehedin, and had now put them in the very best order. But, about twelve o'clock he was told a message from Ras Michael had arrived with great news from Tigré. He went immediately to Kotcam as fast as he could gallop, and found there Guebra Christos, a man used to bring the jars of bouza to Ras Michael at his dinner and supper: low men are always employed on such errands, that they may not, from their consequence, excite a desire of vengeance. The message that he brought was to order bread and beer to be ready for 30,000 men who were coming with the king, as he had just decamped from before the mountain Haramat, which he had taken, and put Za Mensus to the sword, with every man that was in it; this message struck the queen with such a terror, that she was not visible the whole day.

Mr. Bruce had endeavoured to engage his old companion Strates to accompany him on this attempt, as he had done on the former; but the recollection of past dangers and sufferings was not yet banished from

---

Mr. Bruce leaves Gondar and passes the Kahha.

---

his mind ; and upon his asking him to go and see the head of this famous river, he coarsely, according to his style, answered, Might the devil fetch him if ever he sought either his head or his tail again.

On the 28th of October, our traveller and his attendants left Gondar, passed the river Kahha at the foot of the town ; and on the 30th reached Bamba, where Fasil was encamped.—They found Bamba a collection of villages, in a valley now filled with soldiers. They went to the left with their guide, and got a tolerable house, but the door had been carried away. Fasil's tent was pitched a little below them, larger than the others, but without further distinction : it was easily known, however, by the lights about it, and by the nagareet, which still continued beating : he was just alighting from his horse. Mr. Bruce immediately sent Ayto Aylo's servant, whom he had with him, to present his compliments, and acquaint him of his being on the road to visit him. He now thought that all his difficulties were over ; for he knew it was in his power to forward him to his journey's end ; and his servants, whom he saw at the palace near the king, when Fasil was invested with his command, had assured Mr. Bruce not only of an effectual protection, but also of a magnificent reception, if he chanced to find him in Maitsha.

It was now, however, near eight at night of the 30th, before Mr. Bruce received a message to attend him. He repaired immediately to his tent ; and, after announcing himself, waited about a quarter of an hour before it was admitted. Fasil was sitting upon a cushion with a lion's skin upon it, and another stretched like a carpet before his feet, and had a cotton cloth, something like a dirty towel, wrapped about his head. His upper cloak, or garment, was drawn tight about him over his neck and shoulders, so as to cover his hands. Mr. Bruce bowed, and went forward to kiss one of them, but it was so entangled in the cloth, that he was obliged to kiss the  
cloth



cloth instead of the hand. This was done either as not expecting he should pay him that compliment, as he certainly should not have done, being one of the king's servants, if the king had been at Gondar; or else it was intended for a mark of disrespect, which was very much of a piece with the rest of his behaviour afterwards.

There was no carpet or cushion in the tent, and only a little straw, as if accidentally, thrown thinly about it. Mr. Bruce sat down upon the ground, thinking him sick, not knowing what all this meant; he looked stedfastly at our traveller, saying softly, *Endett nawi? bogo nawi?* which, in Amharic, is, *How do you do? Are you very well?* Mr. Bruce made the usual answer, "Well, thank God." He again stopt, as for our traveller to speak; there was only one old man present, who was sitting on the floor mending a mule's bridle. He took him at first for an attendant; but, observing that a servant uncovered held a candle to him, he thought he was one of his Galla; but then he saw a blue silk thread, which he had about his neck, which is a badge of Christianity all over Abyssinia, and which a Galla would not wear. What he was, Mr. Bruce could not make out; he seemed, however, to be a very bad cobbler, and took no notice of them.

Ayto Aylo's servant, who stood behind Mr. Bruce, pushed him with his knee, as a sign that he should speak, which he accordingly began to do with some difficulty. "I am come," said he, "by your invitation and the king's leave, to pay my respects to you in your own government, begging that you would favour my curiosity so far as to suffer me to see the country of the Agows, and the source of the Abay, or Nile, part of which I have seen in Egypt." "The source of the Abay!" exclaimed he, with a pretended surprise, "do you know what you are saying? Why, it is, God knows where, in the country of the Galla, a wild, terrible people. The source of the Abay! Are

---

Fasil endeavours to prevent Mr. Bruce's further progress,

---

you raving!" repeated he again. "Are you to get there, do you think in a twelvemonth, or more, or when?" "Sir," said Mr. Bruce, "the king told me it was near Sacala, and still nearer Geesh: both villages of the Agows, and both in your government." "And so you know Sacala and Geesh?" said he, whistling and half angry. "I can repeat the names that I hear," replied Mr. Bruce, "all Abyssinia knows the head of the Nile."—"Aye," said he, imitating Mr. Bruce's voice and manner, "but all Abyssinia won't carry you there, that I promise you." "If you are resolved to the contrary," answered Mr. Bruce, "they will not; I wish you had told the king so in time, then I should not have attempted it; it was relying on you alone I came so far, confident, if all the rest of Abyssinia could not protect me there, that your word singly could do it."

Fasil now put on a look of more complacency. "Look you, Yagoube," said he, "it is true I can do it; and for the king's sake, who recommended it to me, I would do it; but Abba Salama has sent to me to desire me not to let you pass further. He says it is against the law of the land to permit Franks like you to go about the country, and that he has dreamed something ill will befall me if you go into Maitsha. Mr. Bruce was as much irritated as he thought it possible for him to be. "So so," said our traveller, "the time of priests, prophets, and dreamers, is coming on again." "I understand you," rejoined Fasil, laughing for the first time, "I care as little for priests as Michael does, and for prophets too, but I would have you consider the men of this country are not like yours; a boy of these Galla would think nothing of killing a man of your country. You white people are all effeminate; you are like so many women; you are not fit for going into a province where all is war, and inhabited by men, warriors from their cradle."

Mr. Bruce saw he intended to provoke him; and he had succeeded so effectually, that he should have died,

---

at which the latter is greatly irritated.

---

died, he believes, imprudent as it was, if he had not told him his mind in reply. "Sir," said our traveller, "I have passed through many of the most barbarous nations in the world; all of them, excepting this clan of yours, have some great men among them above using a defenceless stranger ill. But the worst and lowest individual among the most uncivilized people never treated me as you have done to-day under your own roof, whither I have come so far for protection." He asked, "How?" "You have in the first place," said Mr. Bruce, "publicly called me Frank, the most odious name in this country, and sufficient to occasion me to be stoned to death, without further ceremony, by any set of men wherever I may present myself. By Frank you mean one of the Romish religion, to which my nation is as adverse as yours; and again, without having ever seen any of my countrymen but myself, you have discovered from that specimen, that we are all cowards and effeminate people, like, or inferior to, your boys and women. Look you, Sir, you never heard that I gave myself out as more than an ordinary man in my own country, far less to be a pattern of what is excellent in it. I am no soldier, though I know enough of war to see yours are poor proficient in that trade. But there are soldiers, friends and countrymen of mine, who would not think it an action in their lives to vaunt of, that with 500 men they had trampled all your naked savages into dust."

On this Fasil made a feigned laugh, and seemed rather to take his freedom amiss. It was, doubtless, a passionate and rash speech. "As to myself," continued Mr. Bruce, "unskilled in war as I am, let me but be armed in my own country fashion on horseback, as I was yesterday, and I would, without thinking myself overmatch<sup>ed</sup> by the two best horsemen you shall choose from this your army of famous men, who are warriors from their cradle; and if, when the king arrives, you are not returned to your duty, and

we

---

The differences adjusted through the in-

---

we meet again, as we did at Limjour, I will pledge myself, with his permission, to put you in mind of this promise." This did not make things better.

Fasil repeated the word *duty* after him, and would have replied, but Mr. Bruce's nose burst out in a stream of blood; and, that instant, Aylo's servant took hold of Mr. Bruce by the shoulder to hurry him out of the tent. Fasil seemed to be a good deal concerned, for the blood streamed copiously; our traveller then returned to his tent, and the blood was soon staunch'd by washing his face with cold water. He sat down, to recollect himself; and the more he calmed, the more he was dissatisfied at being put off his guard; but it is impossible to conceive the provocation without having proved it. Mr. Bruce felt but too often how much the love of our native soil increases by absence from it; and how jealous we are of comparisons made to the disadvantage of our countrymen by people who, all proper allowances being made, are generally not their equals, when they would boast themselves their superiors.

Mr. Bruce went to bed, and falling into a sound sleep, was waked near mid-night by two of Fasil's servants, who brought each of them a lean live sheep. They said they had brought the sheep, and were come to ask how Mr. Bruce was, and to stay all night to watch the house for fear of the thieves in the army; they likewise brought their master's order for him to come early in the morning to him, as he wanted to dispatch him on his journey before he gave the Galla liberty to return. This dispelled the doubts which Fasil's conduct had raised that he should ever be able to accomplish his undertaking, but it raised his spirits so much, that, out of impatience for morning, he slept very little more that night.

Fasil, having sent for Mr. Bruce the next morning, invited him to partake of a great breakfast; honey and butter, and raw beef in abundance, as also some stewed dishes that were very good. He was very  
hungry,

---

fluence of a present, presented by Mr. Bruce.

---

hungry, having tasted nothing since dinner the day before ; and he had had much exercise of body as well as of mind. Mr. Bruce at last thus addressed Fasil : “ Your continual hurry, all the times I have seen you, has put it out of my power till now to make you the acknowledgment it is common for strangers to present when they visit great men in their own country, and ask favours of them.” Mr. Bruce then took a napkin, and opened it before him : he seemed to have forgotten the present altogether ; but from that moment he saw his countenance changed, he was like another man. “ O Yagoube,” said he, “ a present to me ! you should be sensible that it is perfectly needless ; you were recommended to me by the king and the Ras ; you know we are friends, and I would do twenty times as much for yourself, without recommendation from either ; besides, I have not behaved to you like a great man.”

It was not a very hard thing to conquer these scruples ; he took the several pieces of the present one by one in his hands, and examined them. He then shoved them from him laughing, and said, “ I will not take them from you, Yagoube ; this is downright robbery ; I have done nothing for this, which is a present for a king.”—“ It is a present to a friend,” replied Mr. Bruce, “ often of more consequence to a stranger than a king ; I always except your king, who is a stranger’s best friend.”—Though he was so easily disconcerted, he seemed at this time to be very nearly so. “ If you will not receive them,” continued Mr. Bruce, “ such as they are offered, it is the greatest affront that ever was put upon me ; I can never, you know, receive them again.”

By this he was convinced. More feeble arguments would indeed have satisfied him, and he folded up the napkin with all the articles, and gave them to an officer ; after which the tent was again cleared for consultation ; and, during this time, he had called his man of confidence, whom he was to send with us, and

and instructed him properly. Mr. Bruce plainly saw that he had gained the ascendant ; and that in the expectation of Ras Michael's speedily coming to Gondar, Fasil was as willing to be on his journey the one way, as he himself was the other.

It was about one o'clock, or after it, when Mr. Bruce was again admitted to Fasil : he received him with great complacency, and would have had him sit down on the same cushion with himself, which he declined. " Friend Yagoube," said he, " I am heartily sorry that you did not meet me at Buré before I set out ; there I could have received you as I ought ; but I have been tormented with a multitude of barbarous people, who have turned my head, and whom I am now about to dismiss. I go to Gondar in peace, and to keep peace there, for the king on this side the Tacazzé has no other friend than me ; Powussen and Gusho are both traitors, and so Ras Michael knows them to be. I have nothing to return you for the present you have given me, for I did not expect to meet a man like you here in the fields ; but you will quickly be back ; we shall meet on better terms at Gondar ; the head of the Nile is near at hand ; a horseman, express, will arrive there in a day. I have given you a good man, well known in this country to be my servant ; he will go to Geesh with you, and return you to a friend of Ayto Aylo's and mine, Shallaka Welled Amlac ; he has the dangerous part of the country wholly in his hands, and will carry you safe to Gondar ; my wife is at present in his house : fear nothing, I shall answer for your safety : When will you set out ? to-morrow ?"

Mr. Bruce replied, with many thanks for his kindness, that he wished to proceed immediately, and that his servants were already far off, on the way.—Fasil then said to Mr. Bruce, " Throw off those clothes ; they are not decent ; I must give you new ones, you are my vassal. The king granted you Geesh, whither you are going, and I must invest you." A number

---

Mr. Bruce put in possession of the Agow Geesh.

---

of Fasil's servants then hurried him out ; our traveller presently threw off his trowsers, and his two upper garments, and remained in his waistcoat ; these were presently replaced by new ones, and he was brought back in a minute to Fasil's tent, with only a fine loose muslin under garment or cloth round him, which reached to his feet. Upon his coming back to the tent, Fasil took off the one that he had put on himself new in the morning, and put it about Mr. Bruce's shoulder with his own hand, his servants throwing another immediately over him, saying at the same time to the people, " Bear witness, I give to you, Yagoube, the Agow Geesh, as fully and freely as the king has given it me." Mr. Bruce bowed and kissed his hand, as is customary for feudatories, and he then pointed to him to sit down.

" Hear what I say to you," continued Fasil, " I think it right for you to make the best of your way now, for you will be the sooner back at Gondar. You need not be alarmed at the wild people who are going after you, though it is better to meet them coming this way, than when they are going to their homes ; they are commanded by Welleta Yasous ; who is your friend, and is very grateful for the medicines you sent him at Gondar : he has not been able to see you, being so much busied with those wild people ; but he loves you, and will take care of you, and you must give me more of that physic when we meet at Gondar." Mr. Bruce bowed, and he continued,— " Hear me what I say ; you see those seven people," (our traveller never beheld more thief-like fellows in his life),—these are all leaders and chiefs of the Galla—savages if you please ; they are all your brethren. You may go through their country as if it were your own, without a man hurting you : you will be soon related to them all ; for it is their custom that a stranger of distinction, like you, when he is their guest, sleeps with the sister, daughter, or near relation of the principal men among them. I dare say, you will

---

 The character of the Galla.
 

---

not think the customs of the Galla contain greater hardships than those of Amhara." He then jabbered something to them in Galla, which Mr. Bruce did not understand. They all answered by the wildest howl he ever heard, and struck themselves upon the breast apparently assenting.

"When Ras Michael, (continued Fasil,) came from the battle of Fagitta, the eyes of forty four, brethren and relations of these people present, were pulled out at Gondar, the day after he arrived, and they were exposed upon the banks of the river Angrab to starve, where most of them were devoured by the hyænas; you took three of them up to your house; nourished, clothed, protected, and kindly treated them." "They are now in health," said Mr. Bruce, "and want nothing: the Iteglé will deliver them to you. The only other thing I have done to them was, I got them baptized: I do not know if that will displease them; I did it as an additional protection to them, and to give them a title to the charity of the people of Gondar." "As for that," said Fasil, "they don't care the least about baptism; it will neither do them good nor harm; they don't trouble themselves about these matters; give them meat and drink, and you will be very welcome to baptize them all from morning to night; after such good care these Galla are all your brethren; they will die before they see you hurt." He then said something to them in Galla again, and they all gave another assent, and made a shew of kissing our traveller's hand.

They sat down; but, as Mr. Bruce declares, if they entertained any good-will to him, it was not discernible in their countenances. "Besides this," continued Fasil, "you were very kind and courteous to my servants while at Gondar, and said many favourable things of me before the king; you sent me a present also; and above all, when Joas my master's body was dug up from the church-yard of St. Raphael, and all Gondar were afraid to shew it the least respect, dreading



---

Fasil puts Mr. Bruce under the protection of the Galla.

---

dreading the vengeance of Ras Michael, you, a stranger, who had never seen him, nor received benefit from him, at your own expense paid that attention to his remains, which would have better become many at Gondar, and me in particular, had I been within reach, or had intelligence of the matter: now, before all these men, ask me any thing you have at heart; and, be it what it may, they know I cannot deny it you." He delivered this in a tone and gracefulness of manner, superior, Mr. Bruce thought, to any thing he had ever before seen, although the Abyssinians are all orators, as, indeed, are most barbarians. "Why then," said Mr. Bruce, "by all those obligations you are pleased to mention, of which you have made a recital so truly honourable to me, I ask you the greatest favour that man can bestow upon me—send me, as conveniently as possible, to the head of the Nile, and return me and my attendants in safety, after having dispatched me quickly, and put me under no constraint that may prevent me from satisfying my curiosity in my own way." "This," replied he, "is no request, I have granted it already; besides, I owe it to the commands of the king, whose servant I am. Since, however, you have it so much at heart, go in peace, I will provide you with all necessaries. If I am alive and governor of Damot, as you are, we all know, a prudent and sensible man, unsettled as the state of the country is, nothing disagreeable can befall you."

He then turned again to his seven chiefs, who all rose, himself, Mr. Bruce, and his companions; they all stood round in a circle, and raised the palm of their hands, while he and his Galla together repeated a prayer about a minute long, the Galla seemingly with great devotion. "Now," said Fasil, "go in peace, you are a Galla; this is a curse upon them, and their children, their corn, grass, and cattle, if ever they lift their hand against you or yours, or do not defend you to the utmost, if attacked by others,

---

Singular construction of the houses in Maitsha.

---

or endeavour to defeat any design they may hear is intended against you." Upon this, Mr. Bruce offered to kiss his hand before he took his leave, and they all went to the door of the tent, where there was a very handsome grey horse bridled and saddled: "Take this horse," said Fasil, "as a present from me; it is not so good as your own, but, depend upon it, it is the horse which I rode upon yesterday, when I came here to encamp; but do not mount it yourself, drive it before you saddled and bridled as it is; no man of Maitsha will touch you when he sees that horse; it is the people of Maitsha, whose houses Michael has burnt, that you have to fear, and not your friends the Galla.

Mr. Bruce then took the most humble and respectful leave of him possible, and also of his newly acquired brethren the Galla, praying inwardly he might never see them again. Mr. Bruce, then turning to Fasil, according to the custom of the country to superiors, asked him leave to mount on horseback before him, and was speedily out of sight.

Having passed several little villages, and been overtaken on the way by Strates, his old attendant, who had repented of his former resolution, our traveller, at length, entered the flat country of Maitsha. The houses in Maitsha are of a very singular construction: the first proprietor has a field, which he divides into three or four, as he pleases, (suppose four) by two hedges, made of the thorny branches of the acacia-tree. In the corner, or intersection, of the two hedges, he begins his low hut, and occupies as much of the angle as he pleases. Three other brothers, perhaps, occupy each of the three other angles; behind these their children place their house, and inclose the end of their father's by another, which they make generally shorter than the first, because broader. After they have raised as many houses as they please, they surround the whole with a thick and almost impenetrable abbatis, or thorny hedge, and all the family are  
under

---

*Description of the acacia-tree.*

---

under one roof, ready to assist each other on the first alarm; for they have nothing to do but every man to look out at his own door, and they are close in a body together, facing every point that danger can possibly come from.

Such is their terror of the small pox, which comes here seldom more frequently than once in fifteen or twenty years; that when one of these houses is tainted with the disease, their neighbours, who know it will infect the whole colony, surround it in the night, and set fire to it, which is consumed in a minute, whilst the unfortunate people belonging to it (who would endeavour to escape) are unmercifully thrust back with lances and forks into the flames by the hands of their own neighbours and relations, without an instance of one ever being suffered to survive. This to us will appear a barbarity scarcely credible: it would be quite otherwise if we saw the situation of the country under that dreadful visitation—the small-pox; the plague has nothing in it so terrible.

On the second of November, they pursued their journey in a direction southward, and passed the church of Boskon Abbo; ever memorable to them, as being the station of Fasil in May, when he intended to cut them off after their passage to the Nile.

They next passed the small river Aroossi, which either gives its name to, or receives it from, the district through which it passes: it falls into the Nile about four miles below; is a clear, small, brisk stream; its banks covered with verdure not to be described.

All the little territory of Aroossi is by much the most pleasant that our travellers had seen in Abyssinia; perhaps it is equal to any thing the east can produce: the whole is finely shaded with acacia trees, which, in the sultry parts of Africa, produce the gum-arabic. These trees grow seldom above fifteen or sixteen feet high, then flatten and spread wide at the top, and touch each other, while the trunks are far  
asunder,

asunder, and under a vertical sun, leave you, many miles together, a free space to walk in a cool delicious shade.

This country is watered by small streams. The Assar is the largest river they had seen except the Nile: it was about 170 yards broad and two feet deep, running over a bed of large stones; though generally through a flat and level country, it is very rapid, and after much rain scarcely passable, owing to the height of its source in the mountains of the Agows. Immediately below the ford of the Assar is a magnificent cascade or cataract. Mr. Bruce computed the perpendicular height of the fall at above 20 feet, and the breadth of the stream at something more than 80; but it is so closely covered with trees or bushes, and the ground so uneven, that it needs great attention and perseverance to approach near to it. The stream covers the rock without leaving any part visible, and the whole river falls uninterrupted down with incredible violence.

After passing the Assar, and several villages, they had for the first time a distinct view of the high mountain of Geesh, the long wished-for end of their dangerous and troublesome journey. Under this mountain are the fountains of the Nile; it bore S. E. by S. about thirty miles, as near as could be conjectured, in a straight line, without counting the deviations or crookedness of the road.

On the 3d, at two o'clock in the afternoon, they came to the banks of the Nile; the passage is very difficult and dangerous, the bottom being full of holes made by considerable springs, light sinking sand, and, at very little distance, large rocky stones; the eastern side was muddy and full of pits, the ground of clay: the Nile here is about 260 feet broad, and very rapid; its depth about four feet in the middle of the river, and the sides not above two. Its banks are of a very gentle easy descent; the western side is chiefly ornamented with high trees of the salix, or willow

---

The first cataract of the Nile described.

---

willow tribe, growing straight, without joints or knots, and bearing long pointed pods full of a kind of cotton. This tree is called, in their language, Ha; the use they have for it is to make charcoal for the composition of gun-powder. On the eastern side, the banks, to a considerable distance, are covered with black, dark, and thick groves, with craggy pointed rocks, overshadowed with some old, tall, timber trees going to decay with age.

Mr. Bruce, when he attempted to pass the Nile, was pleased to find that the Agows, who inhabited its banks, in this place, still venerate the divinity of that river. They would not suffer him and his party to ride across the stream on their mules; they even insisted that they should take off their shoes; and threatened to stone those who attempted to wash the dirt from their cloaks and trowsers in the stream.

Our travellers having passed the Nile, arrived at the village of Goutto, and took up their lodgings in the house of a considerable person, who had abandoned it upon their approach, thinking them part of Fasil's army. Though this habitation was of use in protecting them from the poor, yet it hurt them by alarming, and so depriving them of the assistance of the opulent, such as the present owner, who, if he had known they were strangers from Gondar, would have willingly staid and entertained them, being a relation and friend of Shalaka Welled Amlac.

As they heard distinctly the noise of the cataract, and had still a full hour and a half of light, Mr. Bruce determined to visit the water-fall, lest he should be thereby detained the next morning. After riding through a plain hard country, in some parts very stony, and thick-covered with trees, in something more than half an hour's easy galloping all the way, they came straight to the cataract, conducted by the noise of the fall.

This, known by the name of the First Cataract of the Nile, did not by its appearance come up to the  
idea

idea they had formed of it, being scarcely fifteen feet in height, and about sixty yards over; but in many places the sheet of water is interrupted, and leaves dry intervals of rock. The sides are neither so woody nor verdant as those of the cataract of the Assar; and it is in every shape less magnificent, or deserving to be seen, than is the noble cataract at Alata before described, erroneously called the Second Cataract. Mr. Bruce, having satisfied his curiosity at this cataract, galloped back the same road that he had come, without having seen a single person since he left Goutto.

Strates had refused to accompany Mr. Bruce to the cataract, having so violent an appetite that he could not abandon a cow which was just going to be killed for the party. At night it was his turn to watch. After our traveller had retired to rest in a hovel like a hog-sty, near the place where his attendants were sitting, he heard a warm dispute among them; and, on enquiry, found that Strates was cooking steaks on a gridiron to regale himself, while the rest were sleeping: these on the other hand were resolved to play him a trick, to punish his gluttony. When the steaks were spread upon the gridiron, Woldo, the guide given to Mr. Bruce by Fasil, undertook to pour some fine dust or sand through the hole in the roof which served for a chimney; and this he had done with success as often as Strates went from the fire. Not content, however, with this position, but desirous to do the business more effectually, he attempted to change his place upon the roof, thinking it all equally strong to bear him. In this, however, he was mistaken; the part to which he removed gave way, and down he came upon the floor, bringing half the roof and part of the wall, with a prodigious dust, into the fire. The surprise and sight of his own danger made Woldo repeat some ejaculation to himself in Galla. The servants, who were waiting the success of the scheme, cried, "the Galla; the Galla!"—and Strates,

## The mountains of the Moon.

who thought that the whole army of wild Galla had surrounded the house, fell upon his face, calling out —“ Spare me! spare me!” Mr. Bruce was roused from a profound sleep by the noise and cries of Galla! Galla! He started up, and seizing a loaded musket, ran to the door, where he found Woldo unarmed, examining his hurts or burns. A laugh from without led him to suppose what was the matter, and he was soon fully satisfied by the figure which Strates and Woldo made, covered with dirt and dust from the roof. But while they were entertaining themselves with this foolish trick; the thatch which had fallen upon the fire began to flame, and it was with great difficulty extinguished, otherwise the whole village might have been burned down.

On the 3d of November, at eight o'clock in the morning, they left the village of Goutto, and continued, for the first part of the day, through a plain country full of acacia trees. They continued their journey from thence, and at length arrived at a triple ridge of mountains disposed one range behind the other, nearly in form of three concentric circles, which seem to suggest an idea, that they are the Mountains of the Moon, or the Montes Lunæ of antiquity, at the foot of which the Nile was said to rise; in fact, there are no others. These mountains are all of them excellent soil, and every where covered with fine pasture; but as this unfortunate country had been for ages the theatre of war, the inhabitants have only plowed and sown the top of them, out of the reach of enemies or marching armies. On the middle of the mountain are villages built of a white sort of grass, which makes them conspicuous at a great distance; the bottom is all grass, where their cattle feed continually under their eye; these, upon any alarm, they drive up to the top of the mountains out of danger.

On the 4th they had to ascend a mountain, from the summit of which they had a distinct view of great part of the territory of Sacala, the mountain Geesh,

---

The travellers come in sight of that part of the Nile,

---

and church of St. Michael Geesh, about a mile and a half distant from St. Michael Sacala, where they then were. They saw, immediately below them, the Nile itself, strangely diminished in size, and now only a brook that had scarcely water to turn a mill. Mr. Bruce could not satiate himself with the sight, revolving in his mind all those classical prophecies that had given the Nile up to perpetual obscurity and concealment. From this delightful reverie he was awakened by an alarm that they had lost Woldo their guide. Though Mr. Bruce had long expected something from his behaviour, he did not think, for his own sake, it could be his intention to leave them. Various conjectures immediately followed; some thought he had resolved to betray and rob them; some conceived it was an instruction of Fasil's to him, in order to their being treacherously murdered; some again suppose he was slain by the wild beasts, especially those apes or baboons, whose voracity, size, and fierce appearance, were exceedingly magnified. Mr. Bruce began to think, that he might be ill, for he had before complained, and that the sickness might have overcome him upon the road; and this, too, was the opinion of Ayto Aylo's servant, who said, however, with a significant look, that he could not be far off; they therefore sent him, and one of the men that drove the mules, back to seek after him; and they had gone but a few hundred yards when they found him coming, but so decrepid and so very ill, that he said he could go no farther than the church, where he was positively resolved to take up his abode that night. Mr. Bruce felt his pulse, examined every part about him, and saw, he thought, evidently, that nothing ailed him. Without losing his temper, however, Mr. Bruce told him firmly, that he perceived he was an impostor; that he should consider that he was a physician, as he knew he cured his master's first friend, Welleta Yasous: that the feeling of his hand told him, as plainly as his tongue could have

†

done,



---

where its width is not equal to the majority of common brooks

---

done, that nothing ailed him; that it told him likewise he had in his heart some prank to play, which would turn out very much to his disadvantage. He seemed dismayed after this, said little, and only desired them to halt for a few minutes, and he should be better; "for," said he, "it requires strength in us all to pass another great hill before we arrive at Geesh."

"Look you," said Mr. Bruce, "lying is to no purpose; I know where Geesh is as well as you do, and that we have no more mountains or bad places to pass through; therefore, if you choose to stay behind, you may; but to-morrow I shall inform Welleta Yasons at Buré of your behaviour." He said this with the most determined air possible, and left them, walking as hard as he could down to the ford of the Nile. Woldo remained above with the servants who were loading their mules; he seemed to be perfectly cured of his lameness, and was in close conversation with Ayto Aylo's servant for about ten minutes, which Mr. Bruce did not choose to interrupt, as he saw that man was already in possession of part of Woldo's secret. This being over, they all came down to Mr. Bruce as he was sketching a branch of a yellow rose-tree, a number of which hang over the ford.

The whole company passed, and Woldo, seeming to walk as well as ever, ascended a gently-rising hill, near the top of which is St. Michael Geesh. The Nile here is not four yards over, and not above four inches deep where they crossed; it was indeed become a very trifling brook, but ran swiftly over a bottom of small stones, with hard black rock appearing amidst them: it is at this place very easy to pass, and very limpid, but, a little lower, full of inconsiderable falls; the ground rises gently from the river to the southward, full of small hills and eminences, which you ascend and descend most imperceptibly. The whole company had halted on the north side of St. Michael's

2 U 2

church,

---

Woldo's feigned indisposition.

---

church, and there Mr. Bruce reached them without affecting any hurry.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, the day having been very hot for some hours, they were sitting in the shade of a grove of magnificent cedars, intermixed with some very large and beautiful cusso-trees, all in the flower: the men were lying on the grass, and the beasts fed, with the burdens on their back, in the most luxuriant herbage. Mr. Bruce said indifferently to Woldo in passing, that he was glad to see him recovered; that he would be presently well, and should fear nothing. He then got up, and desired to speak with Mr. Bruce alone, taking Aylo's servant along with him. "Now," said our traveller very calmly, "I know by your face you are going to tell me a lie." I do swear to you solemnly, you never, by that means, will obtain any thing from me, no not so much as a good word; truth and good behaviour will get you every thing; what appears a great matter in your sight is not perhaps of such value in mine; but nothing except truth and good behaviour will answer to you; now I know for a certainty you are no more sick than I am."—"Sir," said he, "with a very confident look, you are right; I did counterfeit; I neither have been, nor am I at present, any way out of order; but I thought it best to tell you so, not to be obliged to discover another reason that has much more weight with me, why I cannot go to Geesh, and much less shew myself at the sources of the Nile, which I confess are not much beyond it, though I declare to you there is still a *hill* between you and those sources."—"And pray," said Mr. Bruce calmly, "what is this mighty reason? have you had a dream or a vision in that trance you fell into when you lagged behind below the church of St. Michael Sacala?" "No," replied he, "it is neither trance, nor dream, nor devil neither; I wish it was no worse; but you know as well as I, that my master Fasil defeated the Agows at the battle of Benja. I was there with my master,

---

His unwillingness to accompany Mr. Bruce to the source of the Nile.

---

master, and killed several men, among whom some were of the Agows of this village Geesh, and you know the usage of this country ; when a man, in these circumstances, falls into their hands, his blood must pay for their blood."

Mr. Bruce burst out into a violent fit of laughter, which very much disconcerted him. " There," said our traveller, " did not I say to you it was a lie that you were going to tell me ? do not think I disbelieve or dispute with you the vanity of having killed men ; many men were slain at that battle ; somebody must, and you may have been the person who slew them ; but do you think that I can believe that Fasil, so deep in that account of blood, could rule the Agows in the manner he does, if he could not put a servant of his in safety among them twenty miles from his residence ; do you think I can believe this ? " " Come, come," said Aylo's servant to Woldo, " did you not hear that truth and good behaviour will get you every thing you ask ? Sir," continued he, " I see this affair vexes you, and what this foolish man wants will neither make you richer nor poorer ; he has taken a great desire for that crimson silk-sash which you wear about your middle. . I told him to stay till you went back to Gondar ; but he says he is to go no farther than to the house of Shalaka Welled Amlac in Maitsha, and does not return to Gondar : I told him to stay till you had put your mind at ease, by seeing the fountains of the Nile, which you are so anxious about. He said after that had happened, he was sure you would not give it him, for you seemed to think little of the cataract at Goutto, and of all the fine rivers and churches which he had shewn you ; except the head of the Nile shall be finer than all these, when, in reality, it will be just like another river, you will then be dissatisfied, and not give him the sash."

Mr. Bruce thought there was something very natural in these suspicions of Woldo : besides, he said he was certain, that if ever the sash came into the sight  
of

of Welled Amlac; by some means or other, he would get it into his hands. This rational discourse had pacified Mr. Bruce a little; but it must have been fine indeed to have stood for a minute between him and the accomplishment of his wishes. Mr. Bruce then laid his hand upon the pistols that stuck in his girdle, and drew them out to give them to one of his suite, when Woldo, who apprehended it was for another purpose, ran some paces back, and hid himself behind Aylo's servant. Mr. Bruce after having taken off his sash, "Here is your sash, Woldo," said he, "but mark what I have said, and now most seriously repeat to you, truth and good behaviour will get any thing from me; but if in the course of this journey, you play one trick more, though ever so trifling, I will bring such a vengeance upon your head, that you shall not be able to find a place to hide it in, when not the sash only will be taken from you, but your skin also will follow it."

He took the sash, but seemed terrified at the threat, and began to make apologies. "Come, come," said Mr. Bruce, "we understand each other: no more words; it is now late, lose no time more, but carry me to Geesh and the head of the Nile directly, without preamble, and shew me the hill that separates me from it." He then carried our traveller round to the south side of the church, out of the grove of trees that surrounded it. "This is the hill," said he, "looking aròhly, "that, when you were on the other side of it, was between you and the fountains of the Nile; there is no other; look at that hillock of green sod in the middle of that watery spot; it is in that the two fountains of the Nile are to be found: Geesh is on the face of the rock where you green trees are; if you go the length of the fountains, pull off your shoes, as you did the other day; for these people are all Pagans, worse than those that were at the ford, and they believe in nothing that you believe, but only in this river, to which they pray every day as if it were God; but

---

at one of the fountains of the Nile.

---

but this perhaps you may do likewise." Half undressed as Mr. Bruce was by loss of his sash, and throwing his shoes off, he ran down the hill towards the little island of green sods, which was about two hundred yards distant; the whole side of the hill was thickly overgrown with flowers, the large bulbous roots of which appearing above the surface of the ground, and their skins coming off on treading upon them, occasioned two very severe falls before he reached the brink of the marsh. Mr. Bruce, after this, came to the island of green turf, which was in form of an altar, apparently the work of art, and he stood in rapture over the principal fountain which rises in the middle of it.

It is easier to guess than describe the situation of Mr. Bruce's mind at that moment—standing on that spot which had baffled the genius, industry, and inquiry, of both ancients and moderns, for the course of near three thousand years. Kings had attempted this discovery at the head of armies, and each expedition was distinguished from the last, only by the difference of the numbers which had perished, and agreed alone in the disappointment which had uniformly, and without exception, followed them all. Fame, riches, and honour, had been held out for a series of ages to every individual of those myriads these princes commanded, without having produced one man capable of gratifying the curiosity of his sovereign, or wiping off this stain upon the enterprise and abilities of mankind, or adding this desideratum for the encouragement of geography.

Mr. Bruce, as he advanced, observed Strates waiting for him on the side of the hill. "Strates," he cried, "faithful squire, come and triumph with your Don Quixote at that island of Baratavia, whether we have most wisely and fortunately brought ourselves. Come and triumph with me over all the kings of the earth, all their armies, all their philosophers, and all their heroes!" "Sir," replied Strates, "I do

---

Ludicrous idea of Strates.

---

“I do not understand a word of what you say, and as little of what you mean; you very well know that I am no scholar. But you had much better leave that bog, come into the house, and look after Woldo; I fear he has something farther to seek than your sash, for he has been talking with the old devil-worshipper ever since we arrived.” —“Come,” said our traveller, “take a draught of this excellent water, and drink with me a health to his Majesty King George III. and a long line of princes.” Mr. Bruce had in his hand a large cup, made of a cocoa-nut shell, which was brim-full. His companion drank to the king speedily and cheerfully, with the addition of “Confusion to his enemies!” and tossed up his cup with a loud huzza. “Now friend,” said Mr. Bruce, “here is to a more humble, but still a sacred name; here is to Maria.” Strates enquired whether that was the Virgin Mary; and being answered in the affirmative, replied only with a triumph of disapprobation. The day had been very hot, and thirst, without any aid from enthusiasm, led Mr. Bruce to these frequent libations at this long sought for spring, the most ancient of altars. “Strates,” said he, “here is to our happy return. Come friend, you are yet two toasts behind me; can you ever be satiated with this excellent water!” “Look you, Sir,” answered he very gravely, “as for King George, I drank to him with all my heart, to his wife, to his children, to his brothers, and sisters, God bless them all! Amen! But as for the Virgin Mary, as I am no Papist, I beg to be excused from drinking healths which my church does not drink. As for our happy return, God knows there is no one wishes it more sincerely than I do, for I have long been weary of this beggarly country. But you must forgive me if I refuse to drink any more water. They say these savages pray over that hole every morning to the devil, and I am afraid I feel his horns in my belly already, from the great draught of that hellish water I drank first.” Mr. Bruce, how-  
ever,

ever, having proposed one more toast, and drinking to Catharine empress of Russia, (who was then engaged in an attempt to rescue the Greeks from the Turkish yoke) his example was followed by Strates who shouted "Huzza! Catherine and victory!" while he tossed his cap into the air.

A number of Agows upon the hill had watched our traveller and his companion in silent wonder. Two or three only had come down to the edge of the swamp, had seen the grimaces and action of Strates, and heard him huzza: on which they asked Woldo, as he entered the village, what was the meaning of all this. Woldo told them that the man had been bitten by a mad dog, and was out of his senses, which perfectly satisfied them: they observed that he would be infallibly cured by the Nile, but that the custom, after meeting with such a misfortune, was to drink the water fasting.

Divine honours are paid by the Agows of Damot to the Nile; they worship the river, and thousands of cattle have been offered, and still are offered, to the spirit supposed to reside at its source. They are divided into clans, or tribes; and it is worthy of observation, that it is said there never was a feud, or hereditary animosity, between any two of these clans; or, if the seeds of any such were sown, they did not vegetate longer than till the next general convocation of all the tribes, who meet annually at the source of the river, to which they sacrifice, calling it by the name of the *God of Peace*. One of the least considerable of these clans, for power and number, has still the preference among its brethren, from the circumstance that, in its territory, and near the miserable village that gives it name, are situated the much sought for springs from which the Nile rises.

Geesh, however, though not farther distant from these than 600 yards, is not in sight of the sources of the Nile. The country, upon the same plane with

---

A very remarkable cliff at Geesh.

---

the fountains, terminates in a cliff about 300 yards deep down to the plain of Assoa, which flat country continues in the same subaltern degree of elevation, till it meets the Nile again about seventy miles southward, after it has made the circuit of the provinces of Gojam and Damot.

A prodigious cave is in the middle of this cliff, in a direction straight north towards the fountains; whether the work of nature or art, Mr. Bruce could not determine; in it are many bye-paths, so that it is very difficult for a stranger to extricate himself; it is a natural labyrinth, large enough to contain the inhabitants of the village, and their cattle. In this large cliff Mr. Bruce tired himself part of several days, endeavouring to reach as far northward as possible; but the air, when he had advanced something above an hundred yards, seemed to threaten to extinguish his candle by its dampness; and the people were besides not at all disposed to gratify his curiosity farther, after assuring him there was nothing at the end more remarkable than what he then saw, which he had reason to believe was the case. The face of this cliff, which fronts to the south, has a most picturesque appearance from the plain of Assoa below, parts of the houses at every stage appearing through the thickets of trees and bushes with which the whole face of the cliff is thickly covered; impenetrable fences of the very worst kind of thorn hide the mouths of the caverns above-mentioned, even from sight; there is no other communication with the houses either from above or below, but by narrow-winding sheep paths, which through these thorns are very difficult to be discerned, for all are allowed to be overgrown with the utmost wildness, as a part of their defence; lofty and large trees (most of them of the thorny kind) tower high up above the edge of the cliff, and seem to be a fence against people falling down into the plain. These are all, at their proper season, covered with  
flowers



---

Triangular marsh—circular hillock—curious altar.

---

flowers of different sorts and colours; so are the bushes below on the face of the cliff: every thorn in Abyssinia indeed bears a beautiful flower.

From the edge of the cliff of Geesh above where the village is situated, the ground slopes with a very easy descent due north, and lands you at the edge of a triangular marsh above eighty-six yards broad, in the line of the fountains, and two hundred and eighty-six yards two feet from the edge of the cliff above the house of the priest of the river, where Mr. Bruce resided.

Upon the rock in the middle of the plain, the Agows used to pile up the bones of the beasts killed in sacrifice, mixing them with billets of wood, after which they set them on fire. This is now discontinued, or rather transferred to another place near the church, as they are at present indulged in the full enjoyment of their idolatrous rites, both under Fasil and Michael. In the middle of the marsh, near the bottom of the mountain of Geesh, arises a hillock of a circular form, about three feet from the surface of the marsh itself, though apparently founded much deeper in it. The diameter of this is something short of twelve feet; it is surrounded by a shallow trench, which collects the water, and voids it eastward; it is firmly built with sod or earthen turf, brought from the sides, and constantly kept in repair; and this is the altar upon which all their religious ceremonies are performed. In the middle of this altar is a hole, obviously made, or at least enlarged, by the hand of man. It is kept clear of grass, or other aquatic plants, and the water in it is perfectly pure and limpid, but has no ebullition or motion of any kind discernible upon its surface. This mouth, or opening of the source, is some parts of an inch less than three feet diameter, and the water stood at that time, the 5th of November, about two inches from the lip or brim; nor did it either increase or diminish during all the time of his

## Description of three sources of the Nile.

stay at Geesh, though they made plentiful use of it. This spring is about six feet six inches deep.

At the distance of ten feet from the first of these springs, a little to the west of south, is the second fountain, about eleven inches in diameter; but this is eight feet three inches deep. And about twenty feet distant from the first is the third source, its mouth being something more than two feet large, and it is five feet eight inches deep. Both these last fountains stand in the middle of small altars, made, like the former, of firm sod, but neither of them above three feet diameter, and having a foot of less elevation than the first. The altar in this third source seemed almost dissolved by the water, which in both stood nearly up to the brim; at the foot of each appeared a clear and brisk running rill; these uniting joined the water in the trench of the first altar, and then proceeded directly out, pointing eastward, in a quantity that would have filled a pipe of about two inches diameter. The water from these fountains is very light and good, and perfectly tasteless. It was at this time most intensely cold, though exposed to the mid-day sun without shelter, there being no trees nor bushes nearer it than the cliff of Geesh on its south side, and the trees that surround Saint Michael Geesh on the north, which, according to the custom of Abyssinia, is, like other churches, planted in the midst of a grove.

On the 5th of November, the day after Mr. Bruce's arrival at Geesh, the weather perfectly clear, cloudless, and nearly calm, in all respects well adapted to observation, being extremely anxious to ascertain, beyond the power of controversy, the precise spot on the globe that this fountain had so long occupied unknown, he pitched his tent on the north edge of the cliff, immediately above the priest's house, having verified the instrument with all the care possible, both at the zenith and horizon. With a brass quadrant of three feet radius, by one meridian altitude of the sun's upper limb, all necessary equations and deductions  
consi-

## Geographical position of the principal fountain.

considered, he determined the latitude of the place of observation to be  $10^{\circ} 59' 11''$ ; and by another observation of the same kind made on the 6th,  $10^{\circ} 59' 8''$ ; after which, by a medium of thirty three observations of stars, the largest and nearest, the first vertical, he found the latitude to be  $10^{\circ} 59' 10''$ ; a mean of which being  $10^{\circ} 59' 9\frac{1}{2}''$ , say  $10^{\circ} 59' 10''$ . The longitude he ascertained to be  $36^{\circ} 55' 30''$  east of the meridian of Greenwich.

On the night of the 4th, the very night of Mr. Bruce's arrival, melancholy reflections upon his present state, the doubtfulness of his return in safety, were he permitted to make the attempt, and the fears that even this would be refused, according to the rule observed in Abyssinia with all travellers who have once entered the kingdom; the consciousness of the pain that he was then occasioning to many worthy individuals, expecting daily that information concerning his situation, which it was not in his power to give them; some other thoughts, perhaps still nearer the heart than those, crowded upon his mind, and forbade all approach of sleep. He was, at that very moment, in possession of what had, for many years, been the principal object of his ambition and wishes; indifference, (which from the usual infirmity of human nature follows, at least for a time, complete enjoyment,) had taken place of it. The marsh, and the fountains, upon comparison with the rise of many of our rivers, became now a trifling object in his sight. He remembered that magnificent scene in his own native country, where the Tweed, Clyde, and Annan, rise in one hill; three rivers as he now thought, not inferior to the Nile in beauty, preferable to it in the cultivation of those countries through which they flow; superior, vastly superior to it, in the virtues and qualities of the inhabitants, and in the beauty of its flocks, crowding its pastures in peace, without fear of violence from man or beast. He had seen the rise of the Rhine and Rhone, and the more magnificent sources

---

Curious experiment with quicksilver.

---

sources of the Saone : he began in his sorrow to treat the inquiry about the source of the Nile as a violent effort of a distempered fancy. Grief or despondency now rolling upon him like a torrent, relaxed, not refreshed, by unquiet and imperfect sleep, he started from his bed in the utmost agony ; he went to the door of his tent ; every thing was still ; the Nile, at whose head he stood, was not capable either to promote or to interrupt his slumbers ; but the coolness and serenity of the night braced his nerves, and chased away those phantoms that, while in bed, had oppressed and tormented him.

Numerous dangers, hardships, and sorrows, had indeed beset him through this half of his excursion ; but it was still as true, that another Guide, more powerful than his own courage, health, or understanding, if any of these can be called man's own, had uniformly protected him in all that tedious half ; he found his confidence not abated, that still the same Guide was able to conduct him to his now wished-for home. He immediately resumed his former fortitude, considered the Nile indeed as no more than rising from springs, as all other rivers do, but widely different in this, that it was the palm for three thousand years held out to all the nations in the world as a *detur dignissimo*, which, in his cool hours, he had thought was worth the attempting at the risk of his life ; which he had long either resolved to loose, or lay this discovery, a trophy in which he could have no competitor, for the honour of his country, at the feet of his sovereign, whose servant he was.

Mr. Bruce had procured from the English ships, while at Jidda, some quicksilver, perfectly pure, and heavier than the common sort ; warming therefore the tube gently at the fire, he filled it with this quicksilver, and, to his great surprise, found that it stood at the height of 22 English inches. Suspecting that some air might have insinuated itself into the tube, he laid it by in a warm part of the tent, covered till morning, and

## Description of two other fountains of the Nile.

and returning to bed, slept there profoundly till six, when, satisfied the whole was in perfect order, he found it to stand at 22 English inches; neither did it vary sensibly from that height any of the following days he staid at Geesh; and thence he inferred, that, at the sources of the Nile, he was then more than two miles above the level of the sea; a prodigious height to enjoy a sky perpetually clear, as also a hot sun never over-cast for a moment with clouds from rising to setting. On the 6th of November, at a quarter past five in the morning, Fahrenheit's thermometer stood at 44°, at noon 96°, and at sun-set 46°. It was, as to sense, cold at night, and still more so an hour before sun-rise.

The Nile keeping nearly in the middle of the marsh, runs east for thirty yards, with a very little increase of stream, but perfectly visible, till met by the grassy brink of the land declining from Sacala. This turns it round gradually to the N. E. and then due north; and, in the two miles it flows in that direction, the river receives many small contributions from springs that rise in the banks on each side of it: there are two, particularly one on the hill at the back of St. Michael, Geesh; the other a little lower than it on the other side, on the ground declining from Sacala. These last-mentioned springs are more than double its quantity; and being arrived under the hill whereon stands the church of St. Michael Sacala, about two miles from its source, it there becomes a stream that would turn a common mill, shallow, clear, and running over a rocky bottom about three yards wide: this must be understood to be variable according to the season; and the present observations are applicable to the 5th of November, when the rains had ceased for several weeks.

Nothing can be more beautiful than this spot; the small rising hills about them were all thick covered with verdure, especially with clover, the largest and finest he ever saw; the tops of the heights crowned  
with

---

The streamlets of Gometti, Googueri, and Kebezza.

---

with trees of a prodigious size; the stream, at the banks of which they were sitting, was limpid and pure as the finest crystal; the ford, covered thick with a bushy kind of tree that seemed to affect to grow to no height, but, thick with foliage and young branches, rather to court the surface of the water, whilst it bore, in prodigious quantities, a beautiful yellow flower, not unlike a single wild rose of that colour, but without thorns.

After having stepped over the ford fifty times, he observed it no larger than a common mill-stream. The Nile from this ford turns to the westward, and, after running over loose stones occasionally, in that direction, about four miles farther, the angle of inclination, increasing greatly, broken water and a fall commences of about six feet, and thus it gets rid of the mountainous place of its nativity, and issues into the plain of Goutto, where is its first cataract. Arrived in the plain of Goutto, the river seems to have lost all its violence, and scarcely is seen to flow; but, at the same time, it there makes so many sharp unnatural windings, that it differs from any other river Mr. Bruce ever saw, making about twenty sharp angular peninsulas in the course of five miles, through a bare marshy plain of clay, quite destitute of trees, and exceedingly inconvenient and unpleasant to travel. After passing this plain, it turns due north, receives the tribute of many small streams, the Gometti, the Googueri, and the Kebezza, which descend from the mountains of Aformasha: and united, fall into the Nile about twenty miles below its source. It begins here to run rapidly, and again receives a number of beautiful rivulets, which have their rise in the heights of Litchambara, the semicircular range of mountains that pass behind and seem to enclose Aformasha. Here it begins to become a considerable stream; its banks high and broken, covered with old timber trees for the space of about three miles; it inclines to the north-east, and winds exceedingly, and is then joined

†

by

---

 Remarks on the annual inundation of Egypt.
 

---

by the small river Diwa from the east. As the mere names of places, through which the Nile passes, can afford very little amusement to our readers, we shall only observe, that it empties itself at last into the Mediterranean.

Mr. Bruce proceeds to investigate the reason of the inundations of the Nile, and observes, that it is a remark which holds good through all the works of Providence; and although God, in the beginning, gave an instance of his Almighty power, by creating the world with one single fiat, yet, in the laws he has laid down for maintaining order and regularity in the details of his creation, he has invariably produced all these effects by the least degree of power possible, and by those means that seem most obvious to human conception. But it seemed, however, not according to the tenor of his ways and wisdom, to create a country like Egypt, without springs, or even dews, and subject it to a nearly vertical sun, that he might save it by so extraordinary an intervention as was the annual inundation, and make it the most fertile spot of the universe.

Whatever were the conjectures of the dreamers of antiquity, modern travellers and philosophers, describing without system or prejudice what they saw, have found that the inundation of Egypt has been effected by natural means, perfectly consonant with the ordinary rules of Providence, and the laws given for the government of the rest of the universe. They have found that the plentiful fall of the tropical rains produced every year at the same time, by the action of a violent sun, has been uniformly, without miracle, the cause of Egypt being regularly overflowed. The sun being nearly stationary for some days in the tropic of Capricorn, the air there becomes so much rarified, that the heavier winds, charged with watery particles, rush in upon it from the Atlantic on the west, and from the Indian Ocean on the east. The south wind, moreover, loaded with heavy vapour, condensed in

that high ridge of mountains not far south of the Line, which forms a spine to the peninsula of Africa; and, running northward with the other two, furnish wherewithal to restore the equilibrium.

The sun, having thus gathered such a quantity of vapours as it were to a focus, now puts them in motion, and drawing them after it in its rapid progress northward, on the 7th of January, for two years together, seemed to have extended its power to the atmosphere of Gondar, when, for the first time, there appeared in the sky white dappled thin clouds, the sun being then distant  $34^{\circ}$  from the zenith, without any one cloudy or dark speck having been seen for several months before. Advancing to the Line with increased velocity, and describing larger spirals, the sun brings on a few drops of rain at Gondar the 1st of March, being then distant  $5^{\circ}$  from the zenith; these are greedily absorbed by the thirsty soil, and this seems to be the farthest extent of the sun's influence, capable of causing rain, which then only falls in large drops, and lasts but a few minutes: the rainy season, however, begins most seriously upon its arrival at the zenith of every place, and these rains continue constant and increasing after he has passed it, in his progress northward. Before this, green boughs and leaves appear floating in the Bahar el Abiad, and shew that, in the latitude where it rises, the rains are already abundant. The Galla, who inhabit, or have passed that river, give an account of its situation, which lies, as far as Mr. Bruce could ever calculate, about  $5^{\circ}$  from the Line.

In April, all the rivers in Amhara, Begemder, and Basta, first discoloured, and then beginning to swell, join the Nile in the several parts of its course nearest them; the river then, from the height of its angle inclination, forces itself through the stagnant lake without mixing with it. In the beginning of May, hundreds of streams pour themselves from Gojam, Dامت, Maitsha, and Dembea, into the lake Tzana, which



which had become low by intense evaporation, but now begins to fill insensibly, and contributes a large quantity of water to the Nile, before it falls down the cataract of Alata. In the beginning of June, the sun having passed all Abyssinia, the rivers there are all full, and then is the time of the greatest rains in Abyssinia, while it is for some days, as it were, stationary in the tropic of Cancer.

Immediately after the sun has passed the Line, he begins the rainy season to the southward, still as he approaches the zenith of each place; but the situation and necessities of this country being varied, the manner of promoting the inundation is changed. A high chain of mountains run from about  $6^{\circ}$  south all along the middle of the continent towards the Cape of Good Hope, and intersects the southern part of the peninsula, nearly in the same manner that the river Nile does the northern. A strong wind from the south, stopping the progress of the condensed vapours, dashes them against the cold summits of this ridge of mountains, and forms many rivers which escape in the direction either east or west, as the level presents itself. If this is towards the west, they fall down the sides of the mountains into the Atlantic, and, if on the east, into the Indian Ocean.

Three remarkable appearances attend the inundation of the Nile. Every morning in Abyssinia is clear, and the sun shines; about nine, a small cloud, not above four feet broad, appears in the east, whirling violently round as if upon an axis; but, arrived near the zenith, it first abates its motion, then loses its form, extends itself greatly, and seems to call up vapours from all opposite quarters. These clouds, having attained nearly the same height, rush against each other with great violence. The air, impelled before the heaviest mass, or swiftest mover, makes an impression of its own form in the collection of clouds opposite, and the moment it has taken possession of the space made to receive it, the most violent thunder possible

---

The Plague prevalent in Egypt in the spring.

---

to be conceived instantly follows, with rain; after some hours, the sky again clears, with a wind at north, and it is always disagreeably cold when the thermometer is below 63°.

The second thing remarkable in the variation of the thermometer; when the sun is in the southern tropic, 36° distant from the zenith of Gondar, it is seldom lower than 72°; but it falls to 60° and 59° when the sun is immediately vertical; so happily does the approach of rain compensate the heat of a too scorching sun.

The third is, that remarkable stop in the extent of the rains northward, when the sun, that has conducted the vapours from the Line, and should seem, now more than ever, to be in possession of them, is here overruled suddenly, till, on its return to the zenith of Gerri, again it resumes the absolute command over the rain, and reconducts it to the Line to furnish distant deluges to the southward.

Mr. Bruce says it is in February, March, or April only, the plague begins in Egypt. Mr. Bruce does not believe it an endemial disease, but rather thinks it comes from Constantinople with merchandise, or passengers, and at this time of the year, that the air having attained a degree of putridity proper to receive it by the long absence of dews, the infection is thereto joined, and continues to rage till it is suddenly stopped by the dews occasioned by a refreshing mixture of rain-water, which is poured out into the Nile at the beginning of the inundation.

The first and most remarkable sign of the change brought about in the air is the sudden stopping of the plague at St. John's day. Every person, though shut up from society for months before, buys, sells, and communicates with his neighbour without any sort of apprehension; and it was never known, as far as Mr. Bruce could learn upon fair inquiry, that one fell sick of the plague after this anniversary: it will be observed he does not say *died*; there are, examples of that,

---

The doctrine of predestination credited by the Turks.

---

that, though he believes but few; the plague is not always a disease that suddenly terminates; it often takes a considerable time to come to an head, appearing only by symptoms; so that people taken ill, under the most putrid influence of the air, linger on, struggling with the disease which has already got such hold that they cannot recover; but what Mr. Bruce means is, that no person is taken ill of the plague so as to die after the dew has fallen in June; and no symptoms of the plague are ever commonly seen in Egypt but in those spring months already mentioned, the greater part of which are totally destitute of moisture.

The Turks and Moors are known to be predestinarians; they believe the hour of man's death is so immutably fixed, that nothing can either advance or defer it an instant. Secure in this principle, they expose in the market-place, immediately after St. John's day, the clothes of the many thousands that have died during the late continuance of the plague, all which imbibe the moist air of the evening and the morning, are handled, bought up, and worn without any apprehension of danger; and though these consist of furs, cotton, silk, and woollen cloths, which are stuffs the most retentive of the infection, no accident happens to those who wear them from this their happy confidence.

Mr. Bruce now returns back to his guide Woldo, whom they had left settling their reception with the chief of the village of Geesh. They found the measures taken by this man such as convinced them at once of his capacity and attachment. The miserable Agows, assembled all around him, were too much interested in the appearance our traveller made, not to be exceedingly inquisitive how long his stay was to be among them. They saw, by the horse driven before them, that they belonged to Fasil, and suspected, for the same reason, that they were to maintain them, or, in other words, that they should live at discretion

---

Mr. Bruce's right to Geesh acknowledged by Fasil.

---

tion upon them as long as they chose to tarry there ; but Woldo, with great address, had dispelled these fears almost as soon as they were formed. He informed them of the king's grant to Mr. Bruce of the village of Geesh ; that Fasil's tyranny and avarice would end that day, and another master, like Negadé Ras Georgis, was come to pass a cheerful time among them, with a resolution to pay for every labour they were ordered to perform, and purchase all things for ready money : he added, moreover, that no military service was further to be exacted from them, either by the king or governor of Damot, nor from their present master, as he had no enemies. This news had circulated with great rapidity, and gained them a hearty welcome upon their arrival at the village.

Woldo had asked for a house from the Shum, who very civilly had granted Mr. Bruce his own ; it was just large enough to serve him ; but they were obliged to take possession of four or five others, and were scarcely settled in these, when a servant arrived from Fasil to intimate to the Shum his surrender of the property and sovereignty of Geesh to Mr. Bruce, in consequence of a grant from the king : he brought with him a fine large milk white cow, two sheep, and two goats ; the sheep and goats Mr. Bruce understood were from Welleta Yasous. Fasil also sent them six jars of hydromel, fifty wheat loaves of very excellent bread, and to this Welleta Yasous had added two middle sized horns of excellent strong spirits. Their hearts were now perfectly at ease, and they passed a very merry evening. Woldo, who had done his part to great perfection, and had reconciled the minds of all the people of the village to our traveller, had a little apprehension for himself : he thought he had lost credit with Mr. Bruce, and therefore employed the servant of Ayto Aylo to desire Mr. Bruce not to speak of the sash to Fasil's servant. Our traveller assured him, that, as long as he saw him acting properly, as he now did, it was much more probable  
he

---

Irpone, an Abyssinian beauty.

---

he should give him another sash on their return, than complain of the means he had used to get this last. This entirely removed all his fears; and indeed, as long after as he was with them, he every day deserved more and more their commendations.

Woldo was now perfectly happy; he had no superior or spy over his actions; he had explained himself to the Shum, that they should want somebody to buy necessaries to make bread for our travellers, and to take care of the management of their house. They displayed their lesser articles for barter to the Shum, and told him the most considerable purchases, such as oxen and sheep, were to be paid in gold. He was struck with the appearance of our travellers' wealth, and the generosity of their proposals, and told Woldo that he insisted, since they were in his houses, they would take his daughters for their house-keepers. The proposal was a most reasonable one, and readily accepted. He accordingly sent for three in an instant, and they delivered them their charge. The eldest took it upon her readily; she was about sixteen years of age, of a stature above the middle size, but she was remarkably genteel; and, colour apart, her features would have made her a beauty in any country in Europe: she was, besides, very sprightly; they understood not one word of her language, though she comprehended very easily the signs that they made. This nymph of the Nile was called by nick name *Irpone*, which signifies some animal that destroys mice, but whether of the ferret or snake kind, Mr. Bruce could not perfectly understand; sometimes it was one, and sometimes another, but which it was he thought of no great importance.

After disposing of some of their stock in purchases, she thought herself obliged to render our travellers an account, and give back the residue at night to Woldo, with a protestation that she had not stolen or kept any thing to herself. Mr. Bruce looked upon this regular accounting as an ungenerous treatment of their bene-

---

Construction of the houses near the springs of the Nile.

---

factress. Mr. Bruce called on Woldo, and made him produce a parcel that contained the same with the first commodities they had given her ; and this consisted of beads, antimony, small scissars, knives, and large needles. He then brought out a packet of the same that had not been broken, and told her, they were intended to be distributed among her friends, and that they expected no account from her : on the contrary, that, after she had bestowed these, to buy them necessaries, and for any purposes she pleased, he had still as many more to leave her at parting, for the trouble she had given herself. Mr. Bruce often thought the head of the little savage would have turned with the possession of so much riches, and so great confidence, and it was impossible to be so blinded, as not to see that our traveller had already made great progress in her affections. To the number of trifles he added one ounce of gold, value about fifty shillings sterling, which he thought would defray their expenses all the time they staid ; and, having now perfectly arranged the œconomy of their family, nothing remained but to make the proper observations.

As the houses are all clay and straw, there was no place for fixing his clock ; he was therefore obliged to employ a very excellent watch made for him by Ellicott. The dawn now began, and a few minutes afterwards every body was at their doors ; every one crowded to see them, and they breakfasted in public with very great cheerfulness. The white cow was killed, and every one was invited to his share of her. The Shum, priest of the river, would likewise have been of the party, but he declined either sitting or eating with them, though his sons were not so scrupulous.

Once a year, upon this principal fountain and altar already mentioned, on the first appearance of the dog-star, (or, as others say, eleven days after) this priest assembles the heads of the clans ; and having sacrificed  
a black

a black heifer that never bore a calf, they plunge the head of it into this fountain; they then wrap it up in its own hide, so as no more to be seen, after having sprinkled the hide within and without with water from the fountain. The carcase is then split in half, and cleaned with extraordinary care; and, thus prepared, it is laid upon the hillock over the first fountain, and washed all over with its water, while the elders or considerable people carry water in their hands joined (it must not be in any dish) from the two other fountains; they then assemble upon the small hill a little west of St. Michael, (it used to be the place where the church now stands,) there they divide the carcase into pieces corresponding to the number of the tribes; and each tribe has its privilege, or pretensions, to particular parts, which are not in proportion to the present consequence of the several clans. Geesh has a principal slice, though the most inconsiderable territory of the whole; Sacala has the next; and Seegam, the most considerable of them all in power and riches, has the least of the whole. After having eaten this carcase raw, according to their custom, and drunk the Nile water, to the exclusion of any other liquor, they pile up the bones on the place where they sit, and burn them to ashes.

This used to be performed where the church now stands; but Ras Sela Christos, having beaten the Agows, and being desirous, at the instigation of the Jesuits, to convert them to Christianity, he demolished their altar where the bones were burnt, and built a church upon the site, the doors of which, Mr. Bruce believes, were never opened since that reign, nor is there now, as far as he could perceive, any Christian there who might wish to see it frequented. After Sela Christos had demolished their altar by building this church, they ate the carcase, and burnt the bones, on the top of the mountain of Geesh, out of the way of profanation, where the vestiges of this ceremony may yet be seen; but probably the fatigue attending

---



---

Divine titles given by the Abyssinians to the Nile.

---



---

this, and the great indifference their late governors have had for Christianity, have brought them back to a small hillock by the side of the marsh, west of St. Michael's church, and a little to the southward, where they perform this solemnity every year, and they will probably resume their first altar when the church is fallen to ruins, which they are every day privately hastening.

Having finished their bloody banquet, they carry the head, close wrapt from sight in the hide, into the cavern, which they say reaches below the fountains, and there, by a common light, without torches, or a number of candles, as denoting a solemnity, they perform their worship, the particulars of which Mr. Bruce never could learn; it is a piece of free-masonry, which every body knows, and nobody ventures to reveal. At a certain time of the night they leave the cave, but at what time, or by what rule, our traveller could not learn; neither would they tell him what became of the head, whether it was eaten or buried, or how consumed. The Abyssinians have a story, probably created by themselves, that the devil appears to them, and with him they eat the head, swearing obedience to him upon certain conditions, that of sending rain, and a good season for their bees and cattle; however this may be, it is certain, that they pray to the spirit residing in the river, whom they call the Everlasting God, Light of the World, Eye of the World, God of Peace, their Saviour, and Father of the Universe.

Their landlord, the Shum, made no scruple of reciting his prayers for seasonable rain, for plenty of grass, for the preservation of serpents, at least of one kind of this reptile; he also deprecated thunder in these prayers, which he pronounced very pathetically, with a kind of tone or song; he called the river "Most High God, Saviour of the World;" of the other words Mr. Bruce could not well judge, but by the interpretation of Woldo. Those titles, however,  
of



---

Serpents held in high estimation.

---

of divinity which he gave to the river, he could perfectly comprehend without an interpreter; and for these only he is a voucher.

Mr. Bruce asked the priest, into whose good graces he had purposely insinuated himself, if ever any spirit had been seen by him? He answered, without hesitation, Yes: very frequently. He said he had seen the spirit the evening of the 3d, (just as the sun was setting,) under a tree, which he shewed our traveller at a distance, who told him of the death of a son, and also that a party from Fasil's army was coming; that, being afraid, he consulted his serpent, who ate readily and heartily, from which he knew no harm was to befall him from his visitors. Mr. Bruce asked him, if he could prevail on the spirit to appear to him. He said he could not venture to make that request. He said he was of a very graceful figure and appearance; he thought rather older than middle age; but he seldom chose to look at his face; he had a long white beard; his clothes not like theirs of leather, but like silk, of the fashion of the country. Mr. Bruce asked him how he was certain it was not a man? he laughed, or rather sneered, shaking his head, and saying, "No, no, it is no man, but a spirit." Mr. Bruce then desired to know why he prayed against thunder. He said, because it was hurtful to the bees, their great revenue being honey and wax: then, why he prayed for serpents? he replied, Because they taught him the coming of good or evil. It seems they have all several of these creatures in the neighbourhood, and the richer sort always in their houses, whom they take care of, and feed before they undertake a journey, or any affair of consequence. They take this animal from his hole, and put butter and milk before him, of which he is extravagantly fond; if he does not eat, ill-fortune is near at hand.

Before an invasion of the Galla, or an inroad of the enemy, they say these serpents disappear, and are nowhere to be found. Fasil, the sagacious and cunning

---

---

Great military strength of the Agows.

---

---

ning governor of the country, was, as it was said, greatly addicted to this species of divination, insomuch as never to mount his horse, or go from home, if an animal of this kind, which he had in his keeping, refused to eat.

The Shum's name was Kefla Abay, or Servant of the River; he was a man about seventy, not very lean, but infirm, fully as much so as might have been expected from that age. He conceived that he might have had eighty-four or eighty-five children. That honourable charge which he possessed had been in his family from the beginning of the world, as he imagined. Indeed, if all his predecessors had as numerous families as he, there was no probability of the succession devolving to strangers. He had a long white beard, and very moderately thick; an ornament rare in Abyssinia, where they have seldom any hair upon their chin. He had round his body a skin wrapt and tied with a broad belt. Above this he wore a cloak with the hood up, and covering his head; he was bare-legged, but had sandals, much like those upon ancient statues; these, however, he put off as soon as ever he approached the bog where the Nile rises, which our travellers were all likewise obliged to do. They were allowed to drink the water, but make no other use of it. None of the inhabitants of Geesh wash themselves, or their clothes, in the Nile, but in a stream that falls from the mountain of Geesh down into the plain of Assoa, which runs south, and meets the Nile in its turn northward, passing the country of the Gafats and Gongas.

The Agows, in whose country the Nile rises, are, in point of number, one of the most considerable nations in Abyssinia; when their whole force is raised, which seldom happens, they can bring to the field 4000 horse, and a great number of foot. They were, however, once much more powerful; several unsuccessful battles, and the perpetual inroads of the Galla, have much diminished their strength. The country,  
indeed,

---

The rapid putrefaction of butter prevented by the Moc-moco.

---

indeed, is still full of inhabitants; but from their history we learn, that one clan, called Zeegam, maintained singly a war against the king himself, from the time of Socinios to that of Yasous the Great, who, after all, overcame them by surprise and stratagem; and that another clan, the Denguis, in like manner maintained the war against Facilidas, Hannes I. and Yasous II. all of them active princes. Their riches, however, are still greater than their power, for though their province in length is nowhere 60 miles, nor half that in breadth, yet Gondar and all the neighbouring country depend for the necessaries of life, cattle, honey, butter, wheat, hides, wax, and a number of such articles, upon the Agows, who came constantly in succession, a thousand and fifteen hundred at a time, loaded with these commodities, to the capital. As the dependence upon the Agows is for their produce rather than on the forces of their country, it has been a maxim with wise princes to compound with them for an additional tribute, instead of their military service; the necessities of the times have sometimes altered these wise regulations, and between their attachment to Fasil, and afterwards to Ras Michael, they have been very much reduced, whereby the state hath suffered.

It may naturally be supposed, that, in a long carriage, such as that of an hundred miles in such a climate, butter must melt, and be in a state of fusion, consequently very near putrefaction; this is prevented by the root of an herb, called Moc-moco, yellow in colour, and in shape nearly resembling a carrot; this they bruise and mix with their butter, and a very small quantity preserves it fresh for a considerable time; and this is a great saving and convenience; for, supposing salt was employed, it is very doubtful if it would answer the intention: besides, salt is a money in this country, being circulated in the form of wedges, or bricks, it serves the purpose of silver coin, and is the change of gold; so that this herb is of the  
utmost

utmost use in preventing the increase in price of this necessary article, which is the principal food of all ranks of people in this country.

Besides the market of Gondar, the neighbouring black savages, the woolly-headed Shangalla, purchase the greatest part of these commodities from them, and many others, which they bring from the capital when they return thence; they receive in exchange elephants' teeth, rhinoceros' horns, gold in small pellets, and a quantity of very fine cotton; of which goods they might receive a much greater quantity, were they content to cultivate trade in a fair way, without making inroads upon these savages for the sake of slaves, and thereby disturbing them in their occupations of seeking for gold and hunting the elephant.

The cloathing of the Agows is all of hides, which they soften and manufacture in a method peculiar to themselves; and this they wear in the rainy season, when the weather is cold, for here the rainy seasons are of long duration and violent, which still increases the nearer you approach the Line. The younger sort are chiefly naked, the married women carrying their children about with them upon their backs; their cloathing is like a shirt down to their feet, and girded with a belt or girdle about their middle; the lower part of it resembles a large double petticoat, one ply of which they turn back over their shoulders, fastening it with a broach, or skewer, across their breast before, and carrying their children in it behind. The women are generally thin, and, like the men, below the middle size. There is no such thing as barrenness known among them. They begin to bear children before eleven; they marry generally about that age, and are marriageable two years before: they are past child-bearing before they are thirty, though there are several instances to the contrary.

Besides what they sell, and what they pay to the governor of Damot, the Agows have a particular tribute which they present to the king: one thousand dabra

---

---

The Agow Miziker.

---

---

dabra of honey, each dabra containing about sixty pounds weight, being a large earthen vessel. They pay, moreover, fifteen hundred oxen and 1000 ounces of gold; formerly the number of jars of honey was four thousand, but several of these villages being daily given to private people by the king, the quantity is diminished by the quota so alienated. The butter is all sold; and, since the fatal battle of Benja, the king's share comes only to about one thousand jars. The officer that keeps the account, and sees the rent paid, is called Agow Miziker; his post is worth one thousand ounces of gold; and by this it may be judged with what œconomy this revenue is collected.

Though Mr. Bruce had with him two large tents sufficient for his people, he was advised to take possession of the houses to secure their mules and horses from thieves in the night, as also from the assaults of wild beasts, of which this country is full. Almost every small collection of houses has behind it a large cave, or subterraneous dwelling, dug in the rock, of a prodigious capacity, and which must have been a work of great labour. It is not possible, at this distance of time, to say whether these caverns were the ancient habitation of the Agows when they were Troglodytes, or whether they were intended for retreats upon any alarm of an irruption of the Galla into their country.

On the 9th of November, Mr. Bruce having finished his memorandum relating to these remarkable places, traced again on foot the whole course of this river from its source to the plain of Goutto. He was unattended by any one, having with him only two hunting dogs, and his gun in his hand. The quantity of game of all sorts; especially the deer kind; was, indeed, surprising; but though he was, as usual, a very successful sportsman, he was obliged, for want of help, to leave each deer where he fell. They sleep in the wild oats, and do not rise till you are about to tread upon

---

Mr. Bruce profuse in his presents to the Abyssinians.

---

upon them, and then stare at you for half a minute before they attempt to run off.

Our traveller having now finished his business, nothing remained but to depart. He had passed the time in perfect harmony; the address of Woldo, and the great attachment of his friend Irepone, had kept the house in a cheerful abundance. They had lived, it is true, too magnificently for philosophers, but neither idly nor riotously; and probably never will any *sovereign* of Geesh be again so popular, or reign over his subjects with greater mildness. Mr. Bruce had practised medicine gratis, and killed, for three days successively, a cow each day for the poor and the neighbours. He had cloathed the high priest of the Nile from head to foot, as also his two sons, and decorated two of his daughters with beads of all the colours of the rainbow, adding every other little present they seemed fond of, or that our travellers thought would be agreeable. As for the amiable Irepone, he had reserved for her the choicest of his presents, the most valuable of every article he had with him, and a large proportion of every one of them; he also gave her some gold; but she, more generous and nobler in her sentiments than the others, seemed to pay little attention to these things that announced to her the separation from her friends; she tore her fine hair, which she had every day before braided in a newer and more graceful manner; she threw herself upon the ground in the house, and refused to see our travellers mount on horseback, or take their leave, and came not to the door till they were already set out, then followed them with her good wishes and her eyes as far as she could see or be heard.

Mr. Bruce took his leave of Kefla Abay, the venerable priest of the most famous river in the world, who recommended him with great earnestness to the care of his god, which, as Strates humourously observed, meant nothing less than that he hoped the devil would

---

The travellers leave Geesh, and return to Gondar.

---

would take him. All the young men in the village, with lances and shields, attended our travellers to St. Michael Sacala, that is to the borders of their own district, and the limits of Mr. Bruce's little sovereignty.

On the 10th of November, 1770, Mr. Bruce, and his party left Geesh, on his return to Gondar, and next day halted at Welled Abea Abbo, the house of Shalaka Welled Amlac. This man, soon after Mr. Bruce's arrival in Abyssinia, had been recommended to his care by his friend Ayto Aylo. He had with him two servants, one of whom, as well as his master, was ill of the intermitting fever. As our traveller was abundantly supplied with every necessary by the Iteghé, the only inconvenience he suffered by this was, that of bringing a stranger and a disease into his family. Being, however, in a strange country himself, and daily standing in need of the assistance of its inhabitants, he perceived the policy of rendering services whenever opportunity offered; and, accordingly, received his two patients with the best possible grace. To this he was the more induced as he was informed that Welled Amlac was one of the most powerful, resolute, and best attended robbers in all Maitsha; that this man's country lay directly in his way to the source of the Nile; and that under his protection he might bid defiance to Woodage Asahel, who was considered as the great obstacle to that journey. After several weeks' illness the patient recovered. When he first came to Mr. Bruce's house, he was but indifferently clothed; and, having no change, his apparel naturally grew worse, so that when his disease had entirely left him he made a very beggarly appearance indeed. One evening Mr. Bruce remarked that, he could not go home to his own country without kissing the ground before the Iteghé, by whose bounty he had been all this time supported. He replied, Surely not; adding that he was ready to go whenever Mr. Bruce should think

---

Ayto Aylo apprises Mr. Bruce of a singular

---

proper to give him his clothes. The latter imagined that Welled Amlac might have brought with him some change of apparel, and delivered it into the custody of our traveller's servant; but, on farther explanation, he found that his patient had not a rag but what was on his back, and he plainly told Mr. Bruce, that he would rather stay in his house all his life than be so disgraced before the world as to leave it after so long a stay, without his first cloathing him from head to foot; asking with much confidence: "What signifies your curing me if you turn me out of your house like a beggar." Mr. Bruce still thought there was something of jest in this, and meeting Ayto Aylo, told him laughing of the conversation that had passed. "There is no doubt," answered he very gravely, "that you must clothe him; it is the custom." "And his servant too?" asked Mr. Bruce. "Certainly his servant too; and if he had ten servants that ate and drank in your house, you must clothe them all."—"I think," rejoined our traveller, "that a physician, at this rate, had much better let his patients die than recover them at his own expense."—"Yagoube," said his friend, "I see this is not a custom in your country, but here it invariably is; and if you would pass for a man of consequence you cannot avoid complying with it, unless you would make Welled Amlac your enemy. The man is opulent; it is not for the value of the clothes, but he thinks his importance among his neighbours is measured by the respect shewn him by people afar off. Never fear, he will make you some kind of return; and as for the clothes, I shall pay for them?" "By no means," replied Mr. Bruce; "I think the custom so curious, that the knowledge of it is worth the price of the clothes, and I assure you that intending as I do to go through Maitsha, I consider it as a piece of friendship in you to have brought me under this obligation." After this explanation, Mr. Bruce immediately procured the clothes, a girdle,  
and



---

---

custom among the Abyssinians.

---

---

and a pair of sandals, amounting in the whole to about two guineas, which Welled Amlac received with the same indifference as if he had been purchasing them for ready money. He then asked for his servants' clothes, which, he observed, were too good, and hinted that he should take them for his own use when he arrived at Maitsha. In his new dress he repaired to the Iteghé, who gave him strict injunctions to take care of Mr. Bruce if ever he should come into his hands; and from this time our traveller never knew what had become of Welled Amlac till he reached his house at Welled Abea Abbo.

The master of the house happened to be from home; but Mr. Bruce was kindly received by his wife, mother, and sisters, who, without waiting for the landlord, directed a cow to be instantly slaughtered. The two sisters, about sixteen or seventeen, were handsome girls; but Fasil's wife, who was there, was the most beautiful and graceful of them all; she seemed not to be more than eighteen, tall, thin, and of a very agreeable carriage and manners. The features of her face were very regular; she had fine eyes, mouth, and teeth, and dark brown complexion; at first sight a cast of melancholy seemed to hang upon her countenance, but this soon vanished, and she became very courteous, cheerful, and the most conversible of the whole, or at least wished to be so; but unfortunately she spoke not a word of any language but Galla. The two sisters went out to assist Mr. Bruce's servants in disposing the baggage; but when the latter had pitched the tent, and were about to lay the mattress for sleeping upon, the eldest interrupted them, and not being able to make herself understood by the Greeks, she took it up and threw it out of the tent-door. No abuse or opprobrious names were spared by the servants; one of whom went to tell their master of her impudence, and that if they understood her, she said he was to sleep with her that night, adding they believed they had got into a house

## Description of a Polyphemus banquet.

of thieves and murderers. The girl herself now entered into a violent passion; she told her tale to the matrons with great energy, and a volubility of tongue, past imagination, at which they all laughed heartily.

Welled Amlac soon afterwards arrived. Another cow was killed, great plenty of hydromel produced, and he prepared to regale the strangers as sumptuously as possible, after the manner of the country. Here Mr. Bruce, as he had often been before, was obliged to overcome his repugnance to eating raw flesh. This Polyphemus feast being finished, the horn of hydromel went briskly about. Welled Amlac's eldest sister, whose name was Melectanea, took a particular charge of our traveller, who began to find the necessity of retiring and going to bed while he was able. Here the former story was repeated; the invariable custom of all Maitsha, and the country of the Galla, of establishing a relationship by sleeping with a near of kin was enlarged upon; and as the young lady herself was there, and presented every horn of drink during this polite discussion concerning her person, it might, perhaps, be thought a greater breach of delicacy to have refused than to have complied.

Next morning Mr. Bruce settled with his guide Zor Woldo to his perfect satisfaction, and the latter having solemnly consigned our traveller to Ayto Aylo's servant, in presence of Welled Amlac, took his leave. Mr. Bruce was persuaded to pass that day also at this hospitable mansion; and in the afternoon distributed presents among the ladies. Fasil's wife was not forgotten, and the beautiful Melectanea was covered with beads, handkerchiefs, and ribbands of all colours.

On the 13th, having settled his account with their host, Mr. Bruce and his party set out from the hospitable house of Shalaka Welled Amlac, who accompanied them in person to the ford. By this and his readiness to shew what he thought worthy of their curiosity,

---

Picturesque scenery on the banks of the Jemma.

---

curiosity, and his care in ascertaining the distances and situations of places, he gave them a certain proof that he was well contented, and therefore that they had nothing to fear. They had both the preceding nights heard the noise of cataracts, and were informed, in the morning, that it was the sound of falls in the river Jemma, near whose banks this house is situated. They set out at eight o'clock, and in half an hour came to the ford of the Jemma, which is strong, rugged, and uneven. The Jemma here comes from the east; its banks are most beautifully shaded with acacia and other trees, growing as on the west of the Nile, that is, the trunks or stems of the trees at a distance, but the tops touching each other, and spreading broad. Though growing to no height, these woods are full of game of different kinds, mostly unknown in Europe. The bohur is here in great numbers; also the buffalo, though not so frequent. There are two cataracts lower than this ford of the Jemma, the first about 300 yards below the ford, and another larger, something about half a mile; it is not, however, more than seven or eight feet high, perhaps about ninety feet broad, and the sheet of water is not entire, but interrupted in many places. It falls, however, into a magnificent basin above 400 yards square, and very deep, in which are large fish in great plenty, but no crocodiles.

Mr. Bruce, having satisfied his curiosity as to the Jemma, began to reproach his attendants about the panic which they felt the night before on hearing from Welled Amlac that it would be impossible to proceed to the ford of the Abay, on account of a quarrel between two neighbouring Shums. "You see," said he, "what danger there is. Welled Amlac is with us upon a mule without lance or shields, and accompanied only by two naked servants." Though this was spoken in a language, of which it was impossible Amlac could understand a syllable, yet he  
imme-

---

Maitsha represented as a country of savages.

---

immediately apprehended, in part, what Mr. Bruce meant to say. "You are now in Maitsha," he observed, "and not in my country which is Goutto; you are now in the worst country in all Abyssinia, where the brother kills his brother for a loaf of bread of which he has no need: you are in a country of Pagans or dogs, Galla and worse than Galla; if ever you meet an old man here he is a stranger; all that are natives die by the lance young; and yet, though the two chieftains I mentioned fight to day, unarmed as I am, you are in no danger while I am with you. These people of Maitsha, shut up between the Jemma, the Nile, and the Lake, cannot obtain what they want but from the Agows; they come to the same market with us here in Goutto. The fords of the Jemma, they know, are in my hands; and did they offer an injury to a friend of mine, were it but to whistle as he passed them, they know I am not gentle; they are sensible that though not a Galla, I should one day or other call them to account, though it were in the bed-chamber of their master Fasil."—"Your master too, Welled Amlac, with your leave," replied Mr. Bruce. "Yes, mine too," said he, "by force, but he never shall be by inclination, after murdering Kasmati Eshte. He calls me his brother, and believes me his friend. You saw last night one of his wives whom he leaves at my house, but I hope still to see him and his Galla slaughtered, as the cow in my house was yesterday."—"I am surprised," said Mr. Bruce, "that your house was spared, and that Ras Michael did not burn it in either of his passages through Maitsha."—"In 1769," answered Welled Amlac, "I was not with Fasil at Fagitta, and the Ras passed the Nile above this, far beyond the Kelti; after which I returned with him to Gondar. When in the sequel all Maitsha joined Fasil, I went with my people to meet Michael at Derdera, as I knew he must pass the Nile here, opposite to Abbo, or else  
try

---

Discourse between Mr. Bruce and Welled Amlac.

---

try to cross at Delakus, which was then swollen with rain, and unfordable : but apprehensive, lest marching still higher up, along the Nile, to find a ford, he might burn my house in his way, I joined him the night before he knew of Powussen's revolt. The next morning was that of his retreat, and he chose me to accompany him across the Nile, still considering me as his friend ; and, therefore, perhaps, he would have done no harm to my house." " So it was you," said Mr. Bruce, " who led us that day into the cursed clay-hole which you call a ford, where so many people and beasts were maimed and lost." He replied : " It was Fasil's spies that first persuaded Michael to pass there or at Kerr. I kept him to the place where you passed ; you would have all perished at Kerr. This, to be sure, was not a good ford, nor passable at all except in summer, unless by swimming ; but so many men crossing had made it still worse ; besides, do you remember what a storm it was ? what a night of rain ! O Lady Mariam, always a virgin, said I, while they struggled in the mud and clay, O holy Abba Guebra Menfus Kedus, who never eat or drank from his mother's womb till his death, will you not open the earth that all this accursed multitude may descend alive into hell, like Dathan and Abiram ?"— " A charitable prayer, truly !" replied Mr. Bruce. " I thank you for it, Welled Amlac ; first for carrying us to that charming ford, where, with one of the strongest and ablest horses in the world, I had nearly perished : and, secondly, for your pious wish to dispose of us out of the regions of rain and cold, into such warm quarters in company with Dathan and Abiram."—" I did not know you were there," rejoined he : " I heard that you had staid at Gondar to bring up the black horse. I saw, indeed, with the Ras, a white man who had a good hanger and gun ; but his mule was weak, and he himself seemed sick. As I returned I could have carried him off in the night, but I said, perhaps, it is the brother of Yagoube, my friend and physician ;

---

Arrival of the travellers at the confluence of the Nile and Abay.

---

physician ; he is white like him ; and for your sake I left him.”—“ And pray,” asked Mr. Bruce, “ what did you after we passed the Abay ?” “ After I had seen that devil, Ras Michael, over,” said Welled Amlac, “ I returned under the pretext of assisting Kefla Yasous there ; and, being joined by all my people, we fell upon the stragglers wherever we could find them. We took 17 guns, 12 horses, and about 200 mules and asses laden, and so returned home, leaving the rest to Fasil, who, if he had been a man, should have cut you all to pieces the following day.”—“ And what did you,” enquired our traveller, “ with these stragglers whom you met and robbed ? did you kill them ?”—“ We always kill them,” answered Amlac : “ we spare none. We never do a man an injury and leave him alive to revenge it upon us afterwards. But it was really the same ; they were all sick and weak, and the hyæna would have finished them in the morning ; so it was saving them just so much suffering to kill them outright the night before ; and I assure you, Yagoube, whatever you may think, that I did not do it out of malice.” This conversation sufficiently illustrates Amlac’s ideas of mercy, and the mode of warfare practised in his miserable country.

Towards evening the travellers arrived at the banks of the Abay, where they found the two hostile chiefs encamped opposite to each other, the one on the west, the other on the east side of the river. They had settled all their differences, and had each killed several cows to regale themselves and their friends, which was all the blood shed that day.

The Nile is here a considerable river, its breadth being at this time full three quarters of an English mile. The current is very gentle, and where deep, you can scarcely perceive it flow. The banks on the east side were very high and steep ; and on the west, at the first entrance, the bottom is soft and bad, the water four feet and a half deep ; but you sink above another foot in the clay. Our travellers gained with  
difficulty

---

The passage and town of Delakus.

---

difficulty the middle of the river, where the bottom was firm, and there they rested a little. Whilst they were wading near the other side, they found foul ground, but the water was shallow, and the banks low and easy to ascend. The river side, as far as they could see, was bare and destitute of wood of any kind, only bordered with thistles and high grass, and the water tinged deep with red earth, of which its banks are composed. This passage is called Delakus, and is passable from the end of October to the middle of May. Immediately on the top of the hill ascending from the river is the small town of Delakus, which gives this ford its name; it is more considerable in appearance than the generality of these small towns or villages in Abyssinia, because inhabited by Mahometans only, a trading, frugal, intelligent, and industrious people.

Their conductor, Welled Amlac, put our travellers in mind of the service he had rendered them, and they were not unmindful of him. He had been received with very great respect by the combatants on the east bank, and it is incredible with what expedition he swallowed near a pound of raw flesh cut from the buttocks of the animal yet alive. After some horns of hydromel, he passed on the other side, where he was received with still more affection, if possible, by Welleta Michael, the other chief, and there he began again to eat the raw meat with an appetite as keen as if he had fasted for whole days; he then consigned our travellers to Ayto Welleta Michael, his friend, who furnished them with a servant to conduct them on their way, while he himself remained that night at the ford.

They left the ford at five in the evening; and, pursuing their journey north, they passed the small town of Delakus, continuing along the hill among little spots of brush-wood, and small fields of corn intermixed. When they reached the village of Googue it was night, and they could proceed no farther.

---



---

 The fever denominated *Nedad*.
 

---



---

They found the inhabitants of Gooque the most savage and inhospitable people they had yet met with. On no account would they suffer our travellers to enter their houses, and they were consequently obliged to remain without the greatest part of the night. At last they were conducted to a house of good appearance, but could not procure food either for themselves or their horses. As it had rained violently in the evening, and they were all wet, they kindled a large fire in the middle of the house, which they kept up all night, as well for a guard as to dry themselves, and to this precaution they probably owed their lives: for they found in the morning that the whole village was sick of the fever, and that two families had died out of the house into which they had been put. Weary and wet, Mr. Bruce had slept on the ground by the fire six whole hours; and on receiving this information, though really well, he could not persuade himself that there was not some symptom of fever upon him. By way of precaution he took a dose of bark infused in a quavitaë, and by burning abundance of myrrh and frankincence, and fumigating themselves, our travellers obviated any ill consequences that might have ensued.

This fever, which prevails in all low grounds and plains in the neighbourhood of rivers, is a malignant tertian called *Nedad* or burning. In the last stage of the distemper the belly swells to an enormous size, and the body very soon after death smells intolerably; for which reason they bury the corpse immediately after the breath is out, and often within the hour.

The country about Gooque is both fertile and pleasant, all laid out in wheat, and the grain good. The village itself commands an extensive view of the lake Tzana, whilst the mountains of Begemder and Karoota, that is the whole ridge along Foggora, appear distinctly enough, but sunk low and near the horizon. On the morning of the 14th our travellers quitted this inhospitable place and pursued their journey.

The



---

Maitsha governed by ninety-nine Shums.

---

The province of Maitsha, which they were now leaving, is governed by ninety nine Shums, and is an appendage to the office of Betwudet, to whom it pays two thousand ounces of gold. The people are originally of those Galla west of the Abay. Yasous the Great proving victorious in his wars with that people, who, in many preceding reigns, had laid waste the provinces of Gojam and Damot, transplanted many of them into Maitsha, placing part along the Nile, to guard the passes. His successors at different times followed his example; and these people being converted to Christianity, at least to such Christianity as is professed in Abyssinia, have increased exceedingly, and amounted before the war, in 1768, to 15.000 men, of whom 4000 were horsemen.

The capital of Maitsha is Ibaba, where is a house or castle belonging to the king. The town is one of the largest in Abyssinia, little inferior to Gondar in size and opulence, and has a daily market. It is governed by an officer, called Ibaba Azage, whose employment is worth 600 ounces of gold, and is generally conferred on the principal person in the province, to keep him firm in his allegiance, as a considerable territory is attached to this office. The country round about Ibaba is the most pleasant and fertile, not of Maitsha only, but of all Abyssinia, especially that part called Kollala, between Ibaba and Gojam, where all the principal Ozoros have houses and possessions, which have descended to them from their respective ancestors when kings.

Though Maitsha is peculiarly the appendage of the Betwudet, and governed by him, yet it has a particular government of its own. The ninety nine Shums, who are each a distinct family of Galla, chuse a king, like the Pagan Galla, every seventh year, with all the ceremonies anciently observed while they were Pagans, and these governors possess much more influence over them than the King or the Betwudet. Hence, in Mr. Bruce's time at least, they were in

---

The people of Maitsha carried into captivity.

---

constant rebellion, by which their number was greatly diminished, so that it did not then exceed 10,000 men; Ras Michael having every where destroyed their houses, and carried into slavery their wives and children, who, being sold to Mahometan merchants were transported to Masaiah, and thence to Arabia,

On the 19th Mr. Bruce sent forward his attendants and baggage to Gondar, where they arrived at one o'clock, while he himself proceeded to Koscam, accompanied only by one servant, from the desire of instantly knowing the state of Ozoro Esther's health, and of avoiding Fazil till he knew a little more concerning Ras Michael and the King.

---



---

The name of Frank hated by the Abyssinians.

---



---

## CHAPTER VI.

---



---

Transactions at Gondar—Treachery of Abba Salama—Mr. Bruce's interviews with the Iteghé and with Socinios—Their flight from Gondar—Trial and Execution of Abba Salama and Guebra Denghel—Unhappy Fate of Welleta Selasse daughter of the latter—The King receives a visit from a Savage Chief of the Galla—Horrible custom practised after a battle—Mr. Bruce is rewarded by the King with a gold chain—His preparations for leaving Abyssinia—His last interview with the Iteghé and the monks.

ON Mr. Bruce's arrival at Gondar, he found that capital surrounded by several bodies of troop's under the conduct of some of the chief men of the Abyssinian court, all of whom were in arms, though still acting only on the defensive. Our traveller could not see the queen, who had retired to her apartment under the pretence of devotion, but rather from disgust and melancholy, on perceiving that every thing, however the contrary might be intended, seemed to conspire to bring about the return of Ras Michael, the event which she dreaded more than any other. He then repaired to the residence of Ozoro Esther, and there found the Acab Saat, Abba Salama, who had excommunicated, and afterwards contrived, the murder of her uncle Kasmati Eshte, and had also a principal share in that of Joas himself. He had sent to Fasil, as the latter informed Mr. Bruce, desiring that he might not be permitted to proceed to the head of the Nile, and that from no other reason but hatred to him as a Frank. They bowed at meeting, like two not very cordial friends, and he immediately began a very ill-natured admonitory discourse, addressed for the most part to Ozoro Esther, on the mischief of suffering Franks to remain at liberty in the country, and

---

Aylo Confu's friendship for Mr. Bruce.

---

and to meddle in affairs. "If it be me, father?" said Mr. Bruce, interrupting him with a laugh, "whom you mean by the word Frank, I have, without your advice, gone whither I intended, and returned in safety; and, as for your country, I will give you a very handsome present to put me safely out of it in any direction you please tomorrow, the sooner the better." At this instant Aylo Confu entered the apartment, and catching the concluding words, asked Mr. Bruce, in a very angry tone: "Who is he that wishes you out of the country?"—"I do, sincerely and heartily," said Mr. Bruce, "for one; but what you have just heard was in consequence of a friendly piece of advice that Abba Salama has been giving me."—"Father, father," said Confu, turning to him very sternly, "do you not think the measure of your good deeds is yet near full? Do you not see this place. Kasmati Eshte's house, surrounded by the troops of my father Michael, and do you still think yourself in safety, when you have so lately excommunicated both the King and the Ras? Look you," said he, turning to his mother, "what dogs the people of this country are; that Pagan there, who calls himself a Christian, charitably recommended it to Fasil to rob or murder Yagoube, a stranger offending nobody, when he got him among his Galla in Damot. This did not succeed. He then persuaded Woodage Asabel to send a party of robbers from Samseen to intercept him in Maitsha. Coque Abou Barea himself told me it was at that infidel's desire he sent Welletto Selasse, of Guesque, with a party to cut him off, and that thus narrowly missed him at Degwassa—and all this for what? I could swear they would not have found ten ounces of gold upon him, except Fasil's present, and that they durst not touch."—"But God, rejoined Ozoro Esther, "saw the integrity of his heart, and that his hands were clean; which is not the case with the men in this country."—"And therefore," said Confu, "he made Fasil his friend

---

Mr. Bruce escapes from many very imminent perils.

---

friend and protector, Woodage Asahel's party fell in with an officer of Welleta Yasous, who cut them all to pieces while robbing some Agows." Then rising from the place where he was sitting at his mother's feet, with an elevated voice and a furious countenance, turning to Abba Salama, he exclaimed: "And I too am now nobody; a boy! a child! a mockery to three such Pagan infidels as you, Fasil, and Abou Borea, because Ras Michael is away!"—"You are excommunicated Confu," said the Acab Saat, with great composure, and without any seeming anger; "you are excommunicated if you say I am an infidel or Pagan; I am a Christian priest."—"A priest of the devil!" retorted Confu in a vehement passion—"wine and women, gluttony, lying, and drunkenness—these are your gods! Away!" continued he, putting his hand to his knife; "by St. Michael I swear, ten days shall not pass before I teach both Coque Abou Barea and you your duty. Come, Yagoube, come and see my horses; when I have put a good man on each of them, we will together hunt your enemies to Sennaar." He then swang hastily out of the door, followed by Mr. Bruce, leaving Abba Salama dying with fear, as Ozoro Esther afterwards related, and saying only to her as he went away: "Remember, I did not excommunicate him." From this conversation Mr. Bruce first learned what imminent dangers he had escaped during his recent expedition to the sources of the Nile.

It was not till the 23d of November, that he had an interview with the Iteghé. She sent for him early in the morning, and had a large breakfast prepared. She looked much worn and indisposed. When Mr. Bruce first came into her presence, he knelt with his forehead to the ground. She assumed a very serious countenance, and without desiring him to rise, said gravely to those about her: "There see that madman, who in times like these, when we, the natives of the country are not safe in our own houses, rashly,  
against

---

---

His interview with Socinios.

---

---

against all device, runs out into the fields to be hunted like a wild beast by every robber, of which this country is full." She then made him a sign to rise, which he did, and kissed her hand. "Madam," said he, "if I did this, it was in consequence of the good lessons your majesty deigned to give me."—"Me!" said she, with surprise, "was it I that advised you, at such a time as this, to put yourself in the way of men like Coque Abou Barea, and Woodage Asahel, to be ill used, robbed, and probably murdered?"—"No," replied Mr. Bruce, "Madam, you certainly never did give me such advice; but you must own that every day I have heard you say, when you was threatened by a multitude of powerful enemies, that you was not afraid, you was in God's hands, and not in theirs. Now, Madam, Providence has hitherto protected you: I have, in humble imitation of you, had the same Christian confidence; and I have succeeded. I knew I was in God's hands; and, therefore, valued not the bad intentions of all the robbers in Abyssinia."

A different sort of interview was that which Mr. Bruce soon afterwards had with Socinios, the monarch lately elevated to the throne by the intrigues of the Iteghé and her party. Hitherto our traveller had had no intercourse with the usurper, never having been in his presence, excepting at the trial of the murderer of Joas; neither had he any reason to think that Socinios knew him, or cared more for him than any Greek in Gondar. He had, however, a good friend at court, who waked when he slept, and did not suffer him to remain unknown. This was Abba Salama, who, on the 5th December, instigated the king in one of his drunken fits to sally forth from the palace at night, attended by a number of banditti to plunder several houses. Among these devoted houses was that of Mr. Bruce, who fortunately happened to be at Koscam. Every thing that could be carried away was stolen or broken; among the rest a reflect-  
ing

ing telescope, a barometer and thermometer ; a great number of papers and sketches of drawings were also torn and burnt. The next object of attack was the house of Metical Aga, one of whose servants escaped into a church-yard, the other being slain, as it was said, by the hand of Socinios himself.

The following morning Mr. Bruce received a message to repair to the palace, whither he accordingly went, and was immediately admitted. Socinios was sitting, his eyes half closed, red as scarlet with the preceding night's debauch ; he appeared to be at that moment much in liquor ; his mouth full of tobacco, squirting the spittle to a great distance, and had so covered the floor with it, that it was with great difficulty Mr. Bruce could chuse a clean place to kneel and make his obeisance. He was dressed like the late king, but in every other respect was so unlike, that our traveller was filled with horror and detestation on beholding the throne so unworthily occupied. In short, nothing could describe him more exactly than these lines which Shakespeare has put into the mouth of Hamlet :—

A murderer, and a villain,  
 A slave that is not the twentieth part the tythe  
 Of your preceding lord ; a vice of kings ;  
 A cut-purse of the empire and the rule,  
 That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,  
 And put it in his pocket ;  
 A king of shreds and patches.

It requires, as Mr. Bruce justly observes, something of innate royalty to personate a king.

When our traveller rose and stood before him, he seemed disconcerted and unprepared to speak. He had very few persons about him, except servants, most of the people of distinction having left Gondar and accompanied Fasil. After two or three squirts through his teeth, and a whisper from his brother Chremation, whom Mr. Bruce had never before seen, " Wherefore is it," said he, " that you, who are a  
 17. 3 c great

great man, do not attend the palace? You were constantly with Tecla Haimanout, the exile or usurper, in peace or war: You used to ride with him, and divert him with your tricks on horseback, and I believe ate and drank with him. Where is all the money you received from Ras el Feel, of which province I am told you are still governor, though you conceal it? How dare you keep Yasmine in that government, and not allow Abd el Jelleel, who is my slave, appointed to govern that province?"—Mr. Bruce waited with patience till he had finished; and with a slight inclination of his head, thus replied: —“ I am no great man even in my own country; one proof of this is my being here in yours. I arrived in the time of the late king, and I was recommended to him by his friends in Arabia. You are perfectly well informed as to the great kindness he all along shewed me; but this was entirely from his goodness and no merit of mine. I never ate or drank with him; it was an honor I was incapable of aspiring to. Custom has established the contrary; and I saw no pleasure or temptation to transgress this custom, had it been at my option, as it was not. I have, indeed, often seen him eat and drink; an honor which I enjoyed in common with his confidential servants, as an officer of his household. The gold you mention, which I have several times received from the late King and Ras el Feel, I constantly spent in his service, and for my own honour: but at present I am neither governor of Ras el Feel, nor have I any post under heaven, nor do I desire one. Yasmine, I suppose, holds his from Ayto Confu, his superior; but of this I know nothing. As for tricks on horseback, I know not what you mean. I have for many years been in the constant practice of horsemanship among the Arabs; mine too is a country of horsemen, and I profess to have attained to a degree not common, the management both of the lance and of fire-arms; but I am no buffoon to shew tricks. The profession of arms is my birth-right, derived from my ancestors; and



with these, at his desire, I have often diverted the king, as an amusement worthy of him, and by no means beneath me."—"The king," cried Socinios, in a violent passion: "and who then am I? a slave? Do you know that with a stamp of my foot I can order you to be hewn to pieces in an instant? You are a Frank, a dog, a liar, and a slave. Why did you tell the Iteghé that your house was robbed of fifty ounces of gold? Any other king than myself would order your eyes to be pulled out in a moment, and your carcase to be thrown to the dogs."

Mr. Bruce was not dismayed; though a stranger and alone, he felt superior to such a beast upon the throne. "The Iteghé," said he, "is at present at Koscam, and will inform you if I told her of any gold that was stolen from me, except a gold-mounted knife, given me by the late king the day after the battle of Limjour, and which was accidentally left in my house." At this moment Socinios squirted an arch of tobacco-spittle towards our traveller, but whether on purpose or not, he could not tell. It narrowly missed Mr. Bruce, who felt very much moved. At this instant an old man, of a noble appearance, who sat in a corner of the room next to Socinios, rose, and in a firm tone began to remonstrate with him, on his treatment of our traveller. This man, as he afterwards learned, was his prime-minister, Raś Sanuda, nephew to the Iteghé, who had been banished in the late king's time. During his harangue, Socinios had his eyes mostly shut, and his mouth open and slavering tobacco: he rolled from side to side, scarcely able to preserve his equilibrium. When Sameda ceased, he began with an air of drollery: "You are very angry to day, Baba." Then turning to Mr. Bruce, "Tomorrow," said he, "see you bring me that horse, which Yasine sent you to Koscam; and bring me Yasine himself, or you will hear of it; slave and Frank as you are, enemy to Mary the Virgin; bring me the horse!" Sanuda, however, took Mr.

---

Ras Michael's army in full march for Gondar.

---

Bruce by the hand, saying in a whisper : Don't fear him, I am here, but go home ; next time you come here, you will have horses enough along with you." He too seemed in liquor ; and our traveller, receiving a sign to withdraw, left the king and his minister together with great unwillingness, and returned to Koscám. Here he related what had passed to the Iteghé, who ordered him to remain near Ozoro Esther, as in her service, and go no more to the palace.

Soon after this interview the news reached Gondar that Ras Michael and his army were on their march for that city. This intelligence determined Socinios and the Iteghé to fly. They first repaired to Azazo, where great altercations and disputes followed between them. The queen had engaged the Abuna to attend her, and that prelate had consented upon receiving fifteen mules and thirty ounces of gold, which were paid accordingly : but, when on the morning of her departure, she sent to put the Abuna in mind of his promise, his servants stoned her messenger, without suffering him to approach the house, but they kept the mules and the gold. She continued her flight in company with Socinios till they came to the borders of Kuára, her native country. Those who had made the latter a king had never made a friend ; he was abandoned even by Sanuda, his minister, who had taken up arms, and placed himself under the direction of Ras Michael. It was at length suggested that his presence would infallibly occasion a pursuit which might endanger the queen, her country, and all her friends. On this it was resolved to abandon the unworthy wretch to the soldiers, who stripped him naked, giving him only a rag to cover him, and a good horse, and thus dismissed him to seek his fortune. As for the queen, she joined Fasil, who escorted her to the frontiers of Gojam, where she was received in triumph by her daughter Ozoro Welleta Israel, and Aylo her grandson, to whom half of that province belonged,

---

---

Abba Salama imprisoned.

---

---

belonged, and with them she at last rested in safety, after a long and anxious journey.

On the approach of the king with his army to Gondar, Mr. Bruce left that city to join it. In the evening of the 23d December, while they were encamped upon Mogetch, several of the leading men, who had taken part with Socinios against the king, were brought in prisoners. Among these was Chremation, brother of Socinios, the Acab Saat, Abba Salama, and Guebra Denghel, son-in-law of Ras Michael, and one of the most amiable men in Abyssinia. Mr. Bruce felt much for the latter, who intreated the king to order him to be put to death before the door of his tent, and not delivered to his cruel father-in-law. Our traveller had a great curiosity to see how Abba Salama would be treated; for his head was full of what he had read in European books of the exemption which churchmen enjoyed in that country from the jurisdiction of the civil power.

He was mounted on a mule, with his legs tied under the animal's belly, as were his hands behind his back, having a rope fastened to them, which a man held in his hand on one side, while another led the halter of the mule on the other. While they were untying Abba Salama, Mr. Bruce went into the presence-chamber, and stood behind the king's chair. Very soon after the other prisoners were brought in, and as usual thrown down violently with their faces to the ground, on which they had a very rude fall, as their hands were bound behind them. The Acab Saat rose in a vehement passion; he struggled to loose his hands, that he might perform the act of denouncing excommunication, which is by lifting the right hand and extending the fore-finger; but finding that impossible, he cried out: "Unloose my hands, or you are all excommunicated." It was with difficulty he could be prevailed upon to hear the king, who, with a great composure or rather indifference, said to him: "You are the first ecclesiastical officer in my household,

Ras Michael and his officers enter Gondar.

hold, you are the third in the whole kingdom; but I have not yet learned that you ever had power to curse your sovereign, or exhort his subjects to murder him. You are to be tried for this crime to-morrow; so prepare to shew in your defence, upon what precepts of Christ or his apostles, or what part of the general councils, you found your title to do this.”—“ Let my hands be unloosed !” cried Salama, violently. “ I am a priest, a servant of God; and they have power, says David, to put kings in chains and nobles in irons. And did not Samuel hew king Agag in pieces before the Lord? I excommunicate you Tecla Haimanout.” While he was going on in this manner, Tecla Mariam, son of the king’s secretary, a young man, struck the Acab Saat so violently on the face, that it made his mouth gush out with blood, saying at the same time; “ What! suffer this in the king’s presence!” On this Chremation and the Acab Saat were both hurried out of the king’s presence, without being permitted to say more; indeed, the blow had so disconcerted the latter as to deprive him for a time of the power of speaking. In Abyssinia, it is death to strike or lift the hand to strike, before the king; but in this case the provocation was so great, so sudden, and so unexpected, and the worth of the youth, and the insolence of the offender, so apparent to every body, that a slight reproof only was ordered to be given to Tecla Mariam, and that by his father.

Next morning, about nine o’clock, the king and his officers entered Gondar. Ras Michael proceeded immediately to the palace with the king, who retired as usual to a kind of cage or lettice-window, where he always sits unseen when in council. Mr. Bruce was in the council-chamber, where four of the judges were seated: none of the governors of provinces were present but Ras Michael and Kasmati Tesfos of Siré. Abba Salama was brought to the foot of the table, without irons, at perfect liberty. The accuser for the king, a post in this country in no high estimation, opened

---

The Ras charged with the murder of Joas.

---

opened the charge against him with great force and eloquencē. He stated one by one the crimes committed by him at different periods ; the sum of which amounted to prove Salama to be the greatest monster on earth : among them were various kinds of murder, especially by poison, and incest of every degree. He concluded this black list with high treason, of cursing the king, and absolving his subjects from their allegiance, which he characterized as the greatest of crimes, from its involving in its consequences every other species of guilt. Abba Salama, though he seemed very impatient, did not farther interrupt him than with the exclamation : “ You lie,” and “ It is a lie,” which he repeated at every new charge. His accuser had not said one word respecting the murder of Joas ; but in this, Abba Salama did not follow his example. Being desired to answer in his own defence, he entered upon it with great dignity, and an air of superiority very different from his behaviour in the king’s tent the day before : he laughed and made extremely light of the charges on the article of women, which he neither confessed nor denied, but said those might be crimes among the Franks, (looking at Mr. Bruce) or other Christians, but not the Christians of that country who lived under a double dispensation, the law of Moses and the law of Christ ; and, that in every age, the patriarchs had acted as he did, and were not the less beloved of God. He went roundly into the murder of Joas, and his two brothers, and charged Michael directly with it, as also with poisoning Hatze Hannēs, the father of the present king.

The Ras seemed to avoid hearing sometimes by speaking to people standing behind him, sometimes by reading a paper ; and in particular asked Mr. Bruce in a low voice : “ What is the punishment in your country for such a crime ? ” — To which the latter replied : “ High treason is punished with death in all the countries I have ever known.”

Abba

---

Abba Salama tried by the Ras.

---

Abba Salama next went into the murder of Kasmati Eshte, of which he confessed himself the promoter. He said that the Iteghé with her brothers, and Ayto Aylo, had all turned Franks; and that in order to make the country Catholic, they had sent for priests, who lived with them in confidence, as that Frank did (pointing to Mr. Bruce); that it was against the law of the country to suffer him there; that he was accursed, and ought to be stoned as an enemy to the Virgin Mary. The Ras here interrupted him saying: "Confine yourself to your own defence; clear yourself first, and then accuse any one you please: it is the king's intention to put the law in execution against all offenders, and it is only because he believes you to be the greatest, that he has begun with you." This calmness of the Ras seemed to disconcert Abba Salama. He declared to the Ras that it was owing to his having excommunicated Kasmati Eshte, that room was made for him to come to Gondar; without this event, the king would never have been upon the throne, so that he had still done them as much good as harm by his excommunications. He moreover told the Ras and the judges, that they would all be doubly under the curse if they offered to pull out his eyes, or cut out his tongue, and intreated them with tears not to think of either, if it were only for the long fellowship or friendship which had subsisted between them.

An officer, named Kal Hatze, always stands upon the steps, at the side of the lattice-window, where there is a hole, covered in the inside with a curtain of green taffeta, behind which the king sits, and sends through the hole what he has to say to the Board, who rise and receive the messenger standing. He had not interfered till now, when the officer, addressing himself to Abba Salama, said: "The king requires you to answer directly why you persuaded the Abuna to excommunicate him? The Abuna is a slave of the Turks, and has no king: You are born under a monarchy

## Execution of Acab Saat.

a monarchy. Why did you, who are his inferior in office, take upon you to advise him at all? or why, after having presumed to advise him, did you advise him wrong, and abuse his ignorance in these matters?" At this pointed question, the culprit lost all temper: he cursed the Abuna, called him Mahometan, Pagan, Frank, and infidel; and was running on in this wild manner, when Tecla Haimanout, the eldest of the judges, rose, and addressing himself to the Ras: "It is no part of my duty," said he, "to hear all this railing; he has not offered so much as one fact material to his exculpation.

The king's secretary sent up to the window the substance of the defence: the criminal was carried to the other end of the room, while the king was reading. When he had finished, the Ras called upon the youngest judge to give his opinion, which was, "He is guilty, and should die." The same said all the officers, and after them the judges. When it came to Ras Michael, he said, with affected moderation, "That he was accused of being the enemy and accomplice of Abba Salama; in either case it was not fair that he should judge him." The last voice remained with the king, who sent Kal Hatze to the Board with this sentence: "He is guilty, and shall die the death.—The hangman shall hang him upon a tree to-day." The unfortunate Acab Saat was immediately hurried away by the guards, to the place of execution, which is a large tree before the king's gate; where, uttering to the very last moment, curses against the king, the Ras, and the Abuna, he suffered the death he very richly deserved, being hanged in the very vestments in which he used to sit before the king, and in all the ornaments of his civil and sacerdotal pre-eminence. In going to the tree, he said he had 400 cows, which he bequeathed to some priests to pray for his soul; but the Ras ordered them to be brought to Gondar, and distributed among the soldiers.

---

Execution of Chremation and Guebra Denghel.

---

Chremation was next brought to trial, and underwent the same sentence as the Acab Saat, on which the court broke up, and went to breakfast. All these proceedings occupied less than two hours. Ras Michael had sworn that he would not taste bread till Abba Salania was hanged; and on such occasions he never broke his word.

Next morning came on the trial of the unfortunate Guebra Denghel, whose father-in-law, Ras Michael, claimed the right of trying him, as a subject of his government of Tigré. Guebra Denghel bore his hard fortune with great unconcern, declaring that his only reason for taking up arms against the king was, that he saw no other way of checking Michael's tyranny, and his monstrous thirst of money and power; that the Ras was really king, had subverted the constitution, annihilated all difference of rank and persons, and transferred the efficient parts of the government into the hands of his own creatures. He wished the king might know that this was his only motive for rebellion, and that except to make this declaration, he would not have opened his mouth before so partial and unjust a judge as he considered Michael to be. His daughter, Welleta Selasse, hearing of her father's danger, suddenly broke out of Ozoro Esther's apartment, which was contiguous; and, rushing into the council-room at the instant her father was condemned to die, threw herself at the feet of the Ras with every mark and expression of extreme sorrow. Her intercession was unsuccessful; the old tyrant threatened her with immediate death, spurned her away with his foot; and in her hearing ordered her father to be immediately hanged. Welleta Selasse in a swoon, which resembled death, fell speechless to the ground. The father, forgetful of his own situation, flew to his daughter's assistance, and they were both dragged out at separate doors, the one to death, the other to sufferings still more severe.

This



---

Wellela Selasse poisons herself.

---

This young lady had been peculiarly unfortunate. She was first destined to be the wife of Joas, and the match was nearly concluded, when the fatal discovery that the king had sent his household troops privately to fight for Fasil against Michael, occasioned his death. It was then intended to marry her to Hatze Hannes; the father of Tecla Haimanout; but Michael, who found him unfit to be a king, judged him equally unfit to be the husband of a female, possessing the youth and charms of Wellela Selasse; and, therefore, deprived him at once of his wife, crown, and bride. She was now not seventeen, and it was designed that she should be married to the present king; but Providence prevented an union that was not agreeable to either party. She died soon after her father: being strongly pressed to gratify the brutal inclinations of the Ras, her grandfather, whom she could neither resist nor avoid, she took poison; though some asserted that it was given her by Ozoro Esther from jealousy, but this was certainly without foundation. Mr. Bruce saw her in her last moments, but too late to give her any assistance; and she had told her women-servants and slaves that she had taken arsenic, having no other way to avoid committing so monstrous a crime as incest with the murderer of her father.

Day after day, till the Epiphany, blood continued to be spilt as water at Gondar. Fifty-seven people died publicly by the hand of the executioner in the course of a very few days; many disappeared, and were either murdered privately, or sent to prisons no one knew where. The bodies of those killed by the sword were hewn to pieces, and scattered about the streets. Mr. Bruce was made miserable by seeing his hunting-dogs, twice let loose by the carelessness of his servants, bringing into the court-yard the heads and arms of slaughtered men, and which he could no way prevent, but by the destruction of the dogs themselves. The quantity of carrion, and the

---

---

Gondar infested with wild beasts.

---

---

stench from it, brought down the hyænas in hundreds from the neighboring mountains ; and, as few people in Gondar go out after dark, those rapacious beasts enjoyed the streets to themselves, and seemed ready to dispute the possession of the city with the inhabitants. Often, when he went home late from the palace, and this was the time which the king usually chose for conversation, though he had but to pass the corner of the market-place before the palace, had lanthorns with him, and was surrounded by armed men, he heard them grunting by two and three together, so near, as to be afraid that they would take some opportunity of seizing him by the leg. A pistol would have frightened them, and made them run away ; but the report of one in the night would have alarmed every one who heard it, and it was not now the time to add to people's fears. At last he scarcely ever went out, and nothing engaged his thoughts, but how to escape from this bloody country.

While the King was at the Kahha, keeping the festival of the Epiphany, he received a very extraordinary visitor. This was Guangoul, chief of the eastern Galla, who came, accompanied by about 500 foot, and 40 horse, to pay his respects to the King, and Ras Michael. He was a little, thin, cross-made man, of no apparent strength or swiftness, so far as could be conjectured ; his legs and thighs being small for his body, and his head large. He was of a yellow, sickly color, neither black nor brown, had long hair plaited and interwoven with the bowels of oxen, and so knotted and twisted together as to render it impossible to distinguish the hair from the bowels, which hung down in long strings, part before and part behind, forming the most extraordinary ringlets I had ever seen. He had, likewise, a wreath of guts hung about his neck, and several rounds of the same about his middle, which served as a girdle, under which was a short cotton cloth, dipped in butter, and all his body was wet, and running down  
with

---

Guangoul, chief of the eastern Galla.

---

with the same. In his country, when he appears in state, the beast he rides upon is a cow. He was then in full dress, and mounted upon one not of the largest size, but which had monstrous horns; and rode without saddle. He had short drawers, which did not reach to the middle of his thighs; his knees, legs, feet, and all his body, being bare. He had a shield of a single hide, warped by the heat in several directions, and much in the shape of a large high-crowned hat. He carried a short lance in his right hand, with an ill-made iron head, and a shaft that seemed to be of thorn-tree, but altogether without ornament, which is seldom the case with the arms of barbarians. Whether it was necessary for poising himself on the sharp ridge of the beast's back, or whether it was meant for graceful riding, Mr. Bruce could not determine, being quite unskilled in cowmanship; this barbarian leaned exceedingly backwards, pushing out his belly, and holding his left arm and shield extended on one side, and his right arm and lance in the same way on the other, like wings. The king was seated on his ivory chair, almost in the middle of his tent. The day was very hot, and an intolerable stench announced the approach of the filthy chieftain to all in the tent, before they saw him. The king, when he perceived him coming, was so struck with his whole figure and appearance that he was seized with an immoderate fit of laughter, which he found it impossible to stifle. He, therefore, rose from his chair, and ran as fast as he could into another apartment, behind the throne. The savage alighted from his cow, at the door of the tent, with all his tripes about him; and while the officers in attendance were admiring him as a monster, seeing the king's seat empty, he imagined that it had been prepared for him, and down he sat upon the crimson silk cushion, with the butter running from every part of his body. A general cry of astonishment was raised by every person in the tent, on which he started up; and before he had

---

Three battles fought at Serbraxos.

---

had time to recollect himself, they all fell upon him, and with pushes and blows drove this greasy chieftain to the door of the tent, staring with wild amazement, not knowing what was the matter. It is high treason, and punishable with immediate death, to sit down in the king's chair; and Guangoul owed his life to his ignorance alone. The king had beheld the scene through the curtain; if he laughed heartily in the beginning, he laughed ten times more at the catastrophe. The cushion was thrown away, and a yellow India shawl spread on the ivory stool; and ever afterwards, when it was placed, and the king not there, the stool was turned on its face upon the carpet, to prevent similar accidents.

The rebel army under Gusho and Powussen, soon after this, approached Gondar, and laid waste the adjacent country. These excesses at length impelled Ras Michael and the King to march from that city, on the 13th of May, and to encamp with his army at Serbraxos, where three battles were fought in a very short time. After the second, in which the King had a very narrow escape, Mr. Bruce witnessed the observance of a custom, which he characterizes as the filthiest of all ceremonies that ever disgraced any styling themselves a nation; a ceremony that cannot be described in terms sufficiently decent for modest ears, without adopting the chaste language of Scripture.

All those, whether men or women, who hold fiefs of the crown, are obliged to furnish certain numbers of horse and foot. The women were seldom obliged to personal attendance, till Ras Michael made it a rule, in order to compose a court or society for Ozoro Esther. At the end of a day of battle, each chief is obliged to sit at the door of his tent, and each of his followers, who has slain a man, presents himself in his turn, armed as in fight, with the bloody foreskin of his enemy hanging upon the wrist of his right hand. In this too he holds his lance, which he brandishes  
over

---

Description of a singular Abyssinian custom.

---

over his master or mistress, as if he intended to strike; and repeats, in a seeming rage, a rant which admits of no variation.—“ I am John, the son of George, the son of William, the son of Thomas; I am the rider upon the brown horse; I saved your father's life at such a battle. Where would you have been if I had not fought for you to-day? You give me no encouragement, no clothes, no money; you do not deserve such a servant as I,” and, with that, he throws his bloody spoils on the ground, before his superior. Another comes afterwards and does the same; and, if he has killed more than one man, he returns so many more times, always repeating the same nonsense with the same gestures. I believe there was a heap of above 400 that day, before Ozoro Esther; and it was monstrous to see the young and beautiful Tecla Mariam, sitting upon a stool, presiding at so filthy a ceremony; nor was she without surprise, such is the force of custom, that no compliment of the kind was paid by Mr. Bruce, and that he could not even be present at so disgusting an exhibition. The superiors appear at this time with their heads covered, as before their vassals; their mouth too is hid, and nothing is seen but their eyes; this does not proceed from modesty, but is a token of superiority, of which covering or uncovering the head is a special demonstration. When this ceremony is over, each man takes his bloody trophies, and retires to prepare them in the same manner as the Indians do their scalps. To conclude this horrid account, the whole army, on their return to Gondar, on a particular day of review, throw them before the king, and leave them at the gate of the palace. It is in search of these mangled relics, and the unburied bodies of criminals, that the hyænas repair in such numbers to the town, as to render it dangerous for any person, even if armed, to walk after it is dark.

In this engagement a red flag, the standard of the rebel army, fell into the hands of Mr. Bruce, having  
â been

## Disgrace of Ras Michael.

been picked up in the field by a common soldier, and given to him upon promise of a reward. These colours our traveller presented after the battle to the king, who was so well pleased with the possession of them, as well as with Mr. Bruce's conduct during this day, that he did not forget him in the distribution of rewards. When it came to his turn to kneel before the king, the latter put over his neck a large chain of gold, with very massy links, while the secretary said: "Yagoube, the King does you this great honour, not as a payment of past services, but as a pledge that he will reward them, if you will put it in his power." The chain consisted of 184 links, each weighing 3<sup>1</sup> dwts. It was with the utmost reluctance that our traveller, being in want of every thing, sold great part of the honorable distinction at Sennaar, on his return home; the remainder he brought to England to be transmitted as a proud monument to his descendants.

Soon after the third battle it was found expedient for the king's army to retreat to Gondar, where it was soon invested by the rebel troops, under Gusho and Powussen; and with such success that it was soon obliged to lay down its arms. Ras Michael was deposed from his office, which was bestowed on Gusho, who, by his intrigues and bad conduct to all parties, soon forfeited that dignity, together with his liberty. During these changes the king continued to be acknowledged by all parties, and the Iteghé, to the great joy of the people, returned to her old residence at Koscam. There, after this event, Mr. Bruce passed great part of his time; but his health declining every day, he, with great difficulty, obtained leave of the queen to attempt to return home. The king too, after a hundred exceptions and provisos, had at length been brought to give an unwilling consent.

On the disgrace of Ras Michael, the servant of Metical Aga determined to hasten back to his own country,

---

Mules in great request with the Abyssinians.

---

country, and would fain have persuaded Mr. Bruce to accompany him through Tigré into Arabia. But our traveller, besides being resolved to attempt to complete his journey through Sennaar and the desert, disliked the idea of risking a second passage through Masuah, and subjecting himself again to the brutality of the Naybe of that place.

Captain Price, of the Lion of Bombay, had been obliged by his business with the governor of Mecca, to continue at Jidda till the season after Mr. Bruce went from thence to Abyssinia. Our traveller had already heard once from him, and now a second time. He informed him that his countrymen had been in the greatest pain for him: that several reports had been current, both at Jidda and Mocha, of his having been assassinated; sometimes it was said by the Naybe of Masuah, sometimes that it happened at Gondar; by others at Sennaar, in his return home. Captain Price wrote him in this last letter, that, thinking he must be distressed for want of money, he had left orders with Ibrahim Seraff, the English broker at Jidda, to advance him a thousand crowns, desiring his draft to be sent to Ibrahim, directed to him or his brother at Bombay, and to make it payable to a gentleman of that name who lived in Smithfield.

Mr. Bruce, with ostentation, had made a show of sending his gold chain to Cairo, by the hands of Metic Aga's servant, declaring always that it was the only piece of Abyssinian gold he should carry out of the country, which he was to leave, both in fact and appearance, a *pauper*. Mules are the only beasts for carriage commonly used in Abyssinia, though bulls and cows, of a particular kind, are bought for the purpose by carriers, merchants, and such like, in that country, especially near the mines or quarries of salt; they are very slow, however, and capable of no great burden, though very easily maintained. Mr. Bruce had abundance of mules of his own for carrying his instru-

---

The Roman Catholics called Franks by the Abyssinians.

---

ments and baggage, and the king and Iteghé furnished him with others for his own riding. He had, besides, two favourite horses, which he intended to attempt to carry home, foolishly enough; for though he thought in his own mind, that he was sufficiently informed of, and prepared for all sorts of hardships, he had not foreseen the hundredth part of the difficulties and dangers that were then awaiting him.

After the Iteghé had returned Mr. Bruce always lived at Koscam by her own desire, as her health was very precarious since her residence in Gojam. This suited his intention of withdrawing privately; and therefore, not to multiply the number of leave-takings, he had reduced his whole attendance to the king and queen.

Having finished his preparations Mr. Bruce was admitted to his last interview with the Iteghé, two days before his departure. Here he met Tensa Christos, who was one of the chief priests of Gondar, was a native of Gojam, and consequently of the low church, or a follower of Abba Eustathius; in other words, as great an enemy as possible to the Catholic, or as they call it, the religion of the Franks. He was, however, reputed a person of great probity and sanctity of manners, and had been on all occasions rather civil and friendly to Mr. Bruce when they met, though evidently not desirous of any intimate connections or friendship; and, as Mr. Bruce, on his part, expected little advantage from connecting himself with a man of his principles, he very willingly kept at all possible distance.

This priest came often to the Iteghé's and Ayto Aylo's, with both of whom he was much in favour, and here Mr. Bruce happened to meet him, when he was taking his leave in the evening. "I beg of you," said he, "Yagoube, as a favour, to tell me, now you are immediately going away from this country, and you can answer me without fear, Are you really a Frank, or are you not?"—"Sir," said Mr. Bruce, "I do



---

Mr. Bruce interrogated concerning his religion.

---

“ I do not know what you mean by fear ; I should as little decline answering you any question you have to ask had I ten years to stay, as now I am to quit this country to-morrow : I came recommended, and was well received by the king and Ras Michael ; I neither taught nor preached ; no man ever heard me say a word about my particular mode of worship ; and as often as my duty has called me, I have never failed to attend Divine service as it is established in this country. What is the ground of fear that I should have, while under the king’s protection, and customs of Abyssinia ? ” — “ True,” replied Tensa Christos, “ I do not say you should be alarmed ; whatever your faith is I would defend you myself ; the Iteghé knows I always spoke well of you ; but will you gratify an old man’s curiosity, in telling me whether or not you really are a Frank, Catholic, or Jesuit ? ”

“ I have too great a regard,” answered Mr. Bruce, “ to the request of a man, so truly good and virtuous as you, not to have answered you the question at whatever time you could have asked me ; and I do now declare to you, by the word of a Christian, that my countrymen and I are more distant in matters of religion, from these you call Catholics, Jesuits, or Franks, than you and your Abyssinians are ; and that a priest of my religion, preaching in any country subject to those Franks, would as certainly be brought to the gallows as if he had committed murder, and just as speedily as you would stone a Catholic priest preaching here in the midst of Gondar. Every man in our country is allowed to serve God in his own way ; and as long as their teachers confine themselves to what the sacred books have told them, they can teach no ill, and, therefore, deserve no punishment. No religion, indeed, teaches a man evil ; but, when forgetting this, they preach against government, curse the king, absolve his subjects from allegiance, or incite them to rebellion, as being lawful, the sword of the civil power cuts them off, without any blame falling

3 E 2

upon

---

He receives a benediction from the monks.

---

upon their religion, because these things were done in contradiction to what their priests, from the scripture, should have taught them were truly the tenets of that very religion." The Iteghé now interposed, and the subject was dropped.

Mr. Bruce then got up; and, passing to the other side of the room, he stood by Tensa Christos, saying to him, "And now, holy father, I have one, last favour to ask you, which is your forgiveness, if I have at any time offended you; your blessing, now that I am immediately to depart, if I have not; and your prayers while on my long and dangerous journey, through countries of Infidels and Pagans."

A hum of applause sounded all throughout the room. The Iteghé said something, but what, Mr. Bruce did not hear. Tensa Christos was surprised apparently at Mr. Bruce's humility, which he had not expected; and cried out, with tears in his eyes, "Is it possible, Yagoube, that you believe my prayers can do you any good?"—"I should not be a Christian, as I profess to be, Father," replied Mr. Bruce, "if I had any doubt of the effect of good men's prayers." So saying, he stopped to kiss his hand; when the priest laid a small iron cross upon his head, and, to our traveller's great surprise, instead of a benediction, repeated the Lord's prayer. Mr. Bruce was afraid he would have kept him stooping till he should add the ten commandments likewise, when he concluded, "Gzier y' Baracuc," "May God bless you!" After which, Mr. Bruce made his obeisance to the Iteghé, and immediately withdrew, it not being the custom, at public audiences, to salute any one in the presence of the sovereign.

Twenty greasy monks, however, had placed themselves in his way as he went out, that they might have the credit of giving him the blessing likewise after Tensa Christos. As he had very little faith in the prayers of these drones, so he had some reluctance to kiss their greasy hands and sleeves; however, in running

---

*Ladacious misunderstanding.*

---

ning this disagreeable gauntlet, he gave them his blessing in English,—“ Lord send you all a halter, as he did to Abba Salama,” meaning the Acab Saat. But they, thinking he was recommending them to the patriarch Abba Salama, pronounced at random, with great seeming devotion, their Amen,—So be it.

---



---

Mr Bruce leaves Gondar.

---



---

## CHAPTER VII.

---



---

Journey from Gondar to Tcherkin—Reception at Tcherkin by Ozoro Esther—Hunting of the Elephant, Rhinoceros and Buffalo—Hor Cacamoot—Journey thence to Teawa capital of Atbara—Transactions at Teawa—Treachery of Shekh Fidele—The author proceeds to Beyla—His friendly reception there, and after wards among the Nuba—Arrival at Sennaar.

ON the 26th of December 1771, at one o'clock in the afternoon, Mr. Bruce left Gondar. He had purposed to set out early in the morning, but was detained by the importunity of his friends. The king had delayed his setting out, by several orders sent him in the evening of each day; and he plainly saw there was some meaning in this, and that he was wishing to throw difficulties in the way, till some accident, or sudden emergency (never wanting in that country) should make it absolutely impossible for him to leave Abyssinia. When therefore the last message came to Koscam on the 27th, at night, Mr. Bruce returned his respectful duty to his majesty, put him in mind of his promise, and somewhat peevishly, he believes, intreated him to leave him to his fortune; that his servants were already gone, and he was resolved to set out next morning.

The next morning early, Mr. Bruce was surprised at the arrival of a young nobleman, lately made one of his bed-chamber, with fifty light horse. As he was satisfied, that leaving Abyssinia, without parade, as privately as possible, was the only way to pass through Sennaar, he therefore insisted upon none of his friends accompanying him, and he begged to decline this escort.

cort. At length Mr. Bruce set out by the west side of Debra Tzai, having the mountain on their right hand. From the top of that ascent, they saw the plain and flat country below, black, and, in its appearance, one thick wood, which some authors have called, lately, the Shumeta, or Nubian forest.

All the disasters which Mr. Bruce had been threatened with in the course of the journey, which he had thus begun, now presented themselves to his mind, and made, for a moment, a strong impression upon his spirits. But it was too late to draw back, the dye was cast, for life or for death; home was before him, however distant; and if, through the protection of Providence, he should be fortunate enough to arrive there, he promised himself both ease and the applause of his country, and of all unprejudiced men of sense and learning in Europe, for having, by his own private efforts alone, completed a discovery, which had, from early ages, defied the address, industry, and courage, of all the world.

Having rather hardened, than comforted, his heart by these reflections, he now advanced down the steep side of the mountain, through very strong and rugged ground, torn up by the torrents that fall on every side from above. This is called the Descent of Moura; and, though both they and their beasts were in great health and spirits, they could not, with their utmost endeavours, advance much more than one mile an hour. Two Greeks, one of whom only was his servant, and a third, nearly blind, flying from poverty and want; an old janissary, who had come to Abyssinia with the Abuna, and a Copht who left him at Sennaar; these, and some common men who took charge of the beasts, and were to go no further than Tcherkin, were his only companions in this long and weary journey.

On the 28th towards evening, having entered a thick wood, winding round a hill, in a south east direction, to get into the plain below, they were sur-

---

---

Mogetch—Tcherkin.

---

---

rounded by a great multitude of men, armed with lances, shields, slings, and large clubs or sticks, who rained a shower of stones towards them: but they were at such a distance, that all of them fell greatly short of them. Whether this was owing to fear, or not, they did not know; but supposing that it was, they thought it their interest to keep it up as much as possible. Mr. Bruce, therefore, ordered two shots to be fired over their heads; not with any intention to hurt them, but to let them hear, by the balls whistling among the leaves of the trees, that their guns carried farther than any of their slings; and that, distant as they then were, they were not in safety, if they had a disposition to do harm. They seemed to understand the meaning of this, by gliding through among the bushes, and appearing at the top of a hill farther off, where they continued hooping, and crying, and making signs, which our travellers could not, neither did they endeavour to understand. Another shot aimed at the trees above them shewed that they were still within reach; on which they dispersed or sat down among the bushes, and were no more seen till Mr. Bruce had pitched his tent on the plain below two of their villages. This seemed to give these people fresh uneasiness; for they dispatched a man naked and unarmed, who, standing upon a rock, cried out in the Tigré language, that he wanted to come to our travellers. This Mr. Bruce absolutely refused, that he might not see the smallness of the number of his attendants, and called out to him to get farther off, or he would shoot him. There was no occasion to repeat the admonition; he slid down from the rock like an eel, and appeared again at a considerable distance, still making signs that he wanted to speak to the travellers.

While resting on the banks of the river Mogetch, they had been overtaken by two men, and two women, who were driving two loaded asses, and were going to Tcherkin; they had desired leave to keep

com-

## The three villages of Gimbaar.

company with our travellers, for fear of danger on the road. Mr. Bruce had two Abyssinian servants, but they were not yet come up, attending one of the baggage mules that was lame. They were obliged then to have recourse to one of these stranger women, who understood the language of Tigré, and undertook readily to carry their message to a stranger, who was still very busy making signs from behind a tree, without coming one step nearer.

Mr. Bruce's message to them was, that if they shewed the smallest appearance of further insolence, either by approaching the tent, or slinging stones that night, the next morning, when the horse he expected were come up, he would burn their town, and put every man of them to the sword. A very submissive answer was sent back, with a heap of lies in excuse of what they called their mistake. His two servants coming soon after, both of whom, hereafter, were to be in the service of Ayto Confu, went boldly one to each village, to bring two goats, some jars of bouza, and to prepare fifty loaves of bread for next morning. The goats were dispatched instantly; so was the bouza: but when the morning came, the people had all fled from their houses, without preparing any bread. These villages were called Gimbaar. They were three in number; each situated upon the top of a pointed hill, in a direction from east to west, and made a very beautiful appearance from the plain below.

On the 29th, they left the inhospitable villages of Gimbaar, not without entertaining some apprehensions of meeting the inhabitants again in the course of the day. But though they took every precaution against being surprised, that prudence could dictate, their fears of the encounter did not rise to any great height. Mr. Bruce got, indeed, on horseback, leaving his mule, and putting on his coat of mail. Leaving the fire-arms under the command of Hagi Ismael, the old Turk, he rode always about a quarter of a mile

---

 Waalia—The pass of Dav-Dohha
 

---

before the baggage, that they might not come suddenly upon them, as they had done the night before. However, they met with no opposition, but proceeded on to Waalia, and at half past four in the afternoon encamped in the market-place.

Waalia is a collection of villages, each placed upon the top of a hill, and enclosing, as in a circle, an extensive flat piece of ground about three miles over, on which a very well frequented market is kept. The name is given it from a species of small pigeons, with yellow breasts and variegated back, the fattest and best of all the pigeon kind. Waalia lies due N. W. from Gondar.

On the 30th, they set out from Waalia, and proceeded along the Mai Lumi, or the river of Lemons. A prodigious quantity of fruit loaded the branches of these trees even likely to break them; and these were in all stages of ripeness. Multitudes of blossoms covered the opposite part of the tree, and sent forth the most delicious odour possible. They provided themselves amply with this fruit. The natives make no use of it, but our travellers found it a great refreshment to them, both mixed with their water, and as sauce to their meat, of which they had now no great variety since their onions had failed them, and a supply of them was no longer to be procured.

They soon after reached the pass of Dav-Dohha, a very narrow defile, full of strata of rocks, like steps of stairs, but so high, that, without leaping, or being pulled up, no horse or mule can ascend. Besides, the descent, though short, is very steep, and almost choaked up by huge stones, which the torrents, after washing the earth from about them, had rolled down from the mountain above. Both sides of the defile are covered thick with wood and bushes, especially that detestable thorn the kantuffa, so justly reprobated in Abyssinia. Having extricated themselves successfully from this pass, their spirits were so elated, that they began to think their journey now at an end, not reflecting



---

---

Tcherkin.

---

---

flecting how many passes, full of real danger, were still before them.

On the morning of the 2d of January 1772, Mr. Bruce having dressed his hair, perfumed it according to the custom of the country, and put on clean clothes, with no other arms but his knife, and a pair of pistols at his girdle, came out of his tent to mount the mule for Tcherkin. He now saw a servant of Ayto Confu's whose name was Welleta Yasous, and had met him the preceding night pulling the Guinea-fowls and pigeons out of the pannier, where his servants had put them, and scattering them upon the ground, saying to those who interrupted him, "Throw away this car- rion: you shall have a better breakfast and dinner to-day;" and turning to Mr. Bruce, more than ordi- narily pleased at seeing him dressed, and that he con- tinued to use the Abyssinian habit, he jumped upon his mule, and appeared in great spirits. They all set out at a brisker pace than usual, by the assistance of the two fresh mules.

They passed through the midst of several small vil- lages, and at last Mr. Bruce pitched his tent in the market-place at Tcherkin, which seemed a beautiful lawn laid out for pleasure, shaded with fine old trees, of an enormous height and size, and watered by a small but very limpid brook, running over beds of pebbles as white as snow.

The impatient Welleta Yasous would only give Mr. Bruce time to see his quadrant and other instru- ments safely stowed, but hurried him through a very narrow and crooked path up the side of the mountain, at every turn of which was placed a great rock or stone, the station for muskets to enfilade the different stages of the road below, where it was strait for any distance. They at last reached the other court, where Mr. Bruce saw a great many of his old acquaintance, whom he had known at Ozoro Esther's house at Gon- dar, and who all welcomed him with the greatest de- monstrations of joy, as if he had come from a long journey.

---

Ozoro Esther determined to visit Jerusalem.

---

Mr. Bruce was then taken into an inner apartment, where, to his great surprise, instead of Ayto Confu, he saw his mother, Ozoro Esther, sitting on a couch, and at her feet the secretary's daughter, the beautiful Tecla Mariam; and, soon after, the secretary himself, and several others belonging to the court. After having made a profound obeisance, "Ozoro Esther," said Mr. Bruce, "I cannot speak for surprize. What is the meaning of your having left Gondar to come into this wilderness? As for Tecla Mariam, I am not surprized at seeing her; I know at any time she would rather die than leave you; but that you have both come hither without Ayto Confu, and in so short a time, is what I cannot comprehend."—"There is nothing so strange in this," replied Ozoro Esther, "the troops of Begemder have taken away my husband, Ras Michael, God knows where; and, therefore, being now a single woman, I am resolved to go to Jerusalem to pray for my husband, and to die there, and be buried in the holy sepulchre. You would not stay with us; so we are going with you. Is there any thing surprising in all this?"

"But tell me truly," said Tecla Mariam, "you that know every thing, while peeping and poring through these long glasses, did not you learn by the stars that we were to meet you here?"—"Madam," answered Mr. Bruce, "if there was one star in the firmament that had announced to me such agreeable news, I should have relapsed into the old idolatry of this country, and worshipped that star for the rest of my life." Breakfast now came in; the conversation took a very lively turn, and from the secretary our traveller learned that the matter stood thus: The king, restoring the villages to the Iteghé, according to the stipulation of his last treaty with Powussen, thought that he might so far infringe upon it, from gratitude to Ras Michael, as to give part of the number to Ozoro Esther, the Iteghé's daughter; and Ayto Confu, going to Tcherkin to hunt, he took his mother

mother along with him to put her in possession; for the Iteghé's people were not lambs, nor did they pay much regard to the orders of the king, nor to that of the Iteghé their mistress. They now wanted only the presence of Aytó Confu to make their happiness complete; he came about four, and with him Ayto Engedan, and a great company. There was nothing but rejoicing on all sides. Seven ladies, relations and companions of Ozoro Esther, came with Ayto Confu; and Mr. Bruce confesses this to have been one of the happiest moments of his life. He quite forgot the disastrous journey he had before him, and all the dangers that awaited him. He began even to regret being so far in his way to leave Abyssinia for ever.

Ayto Confu's house at Tcherkin is built on the edge of a precipice, which takes its name from the mountain Amba Tcherkin. It is built all with cane very artificially, the outer wall being composed of fascines of canes, so neatly joined together as not to be penetrated by rain or wind. The entry is from the south side, very crooked and difficult, half way up the rock. On the east is a very plentiful spring, which furnishes the house with excellent water. Yet after all, this house, though inaccessible, is not defensible, and affords very little safety to its master; for the Shan-gala, with flax, or any thing combustible, tied to the point of their arrows, could easily set it on fire if they once approached it; and the Abyssinians with guns could as easily destroy it, as, on such occasions, they wrap their balls in cotton wads. The inside of the state rooms were hung with long stripes of carpeting, and the floors covered with the same.

About Tcherkin is great plenty of game of every sort, elephants, rhinoceroses, and a great number of buffaloes, which differ nothing in form from the buffaloes of Europe or of Egypt, but very much in temper and disposition. They are fierce, rash, and fearless of danger; and, contrary to the practice of any other

---

---

The Abyssinian mode of hunting the Elephant.

---

---

other creature not carnivorous, they attack the traveller and the hunter equally, and it requires address to escape from them. They seem to be, of all others, the creature the most given to ease and indulgence. They lie under the most shady trees, near large pools of water, of which they make constant use, and sleep soundly all the day long. The flesh of the female is very good when fat, but that of the male, hard, lean, and disagreeable. Their horns are used in various manners by the turners, in which craft the Abyssinians are very expert.

Though they were all happy to their wish in this enchanted mountain, the active spirit of Ayto Confu could not rest ; he was come to hunt the elephant, and hunt him he would. All those that understood any thing of this exercise had assembled from a great distance to meet Ayto Confu at Tcherkin. He and Engedan, from the moment he arrived, had been overlooking, from the precipice, their servants training and managing their horses in the market-place below. Great bunches of the finest canes had been brought from Kuara for javelins ; and the whole house was employed in fitting heads to them in the most advantageous manner. Mr. Bruce would have been very well content to have remained where he was ; yet the preparations for sport of so noble a kind roused his spirits, and made him desirous to join in it. On the other hand, the ladies all declared, that they thought, by leaving them, they were devoting them to death or slavery, as they did not doubt, if the Shangalla missed the hunting party, they would come forward to the mountain and slay them all. But a sufficient garrison was left, and they were well assured that the Shangalla, being informed they were out, and armed, and knowing their numbers, would take care to keep close in their thickets far out of their way.

On the 6th, an hour before day, after a hearty breakfast, they mounted on horseback, to the number  
of

## The Agageer.

of about thirty, belonging to Ayto Confu. But there was another body, both of horse and foot, which made hunting the elephant their particular business. These men dwell constantly in the woods, and know very little the use of bread, living entirely upon the flesh of the beasts they kill, chiefly that of the elephant or rhinoceros. They are exceedingly thin, light, and agile, both on horseback and foot; very swarthy, though few of them black; none of them woolly-headed, and all have European features. They are called Agageer, a name of their profession, not of their nation, which comes from the word Agar, and signifies to hough or ham-string with a sharp weapon. More properly it means, indeed, the cutting the tendon of the heel, and is a characteristic of the manner in which they kill the elephant, which is shortly as follows:—Two men, absolutely naked, without any rag or covering at all about them, get on horseback; this precaution is from fear of being laid hold of by the trees or bushes, in making their escape from a very watchful enemy. One of these riders sits upon the back of the horse, sometimes with a saddle, and sometimes without one, with only a switch or short stick in one hand, carefully managing the bridle with the other; behind him sits his companion, who has no other arms than a broad-sword, such as is used by the Slavonians, and which is brought from Trieste. His left hand is employed grasping the sword by the handle, and about fourteen inches of the blade is covered with whip-cord. This part he takes in his right hand, without any danger of being hurt by it; and, though the edges of the lower part of the sword are as sharp as a razor, he carries it without a scabbard.

As soon as the elephant is found feeding, the horseman rides before him as near as possible; or, if he flies, crosses him in all directions, crying out, "I am such a man and such a man; this is my horse, that has such a name; I killed your father in such a place, and

## Elephant-hunting.

your grand-father in such another place, and I am now come to kill you; you are but an ass in comparison of them." This nonsense he verily believes the elephant understands, who, chafed and angry at hearing the noise immediately before him, seeks to seize him with his trunk, or proboscis, and, intent upon this, follows the horse every where, turning round with him frequently, neglectful of making his escape by running straight forward, in which consists his only safety. After having made him turn once or twice in pursuit of the horse, the horseman rides close up along-side of him, and drops his companion just behind on the off side; and while he engages the elephant's attention upon the horse, the footman behind gives him a drawn stroke just above the heel, or what in man is called the tendon of Achilles. This is the critical moment; the horseman immediately wheels round, and takes his companion up behind him, and rides off full speed after the rest of the herd, if they have started more than one; and sometimes an expert agageer will kill three out of one herd. If the sword is good, and the man not afraid, the tendon is commonly entirely separated; and if it is not cut through, it is generally so far divided, that the animal, with the stress he puts upon it, breaks the remaining part asunder. In either case, he remains incapable of advancing a step, till the horseman returning, or his companions coming up, pierce him through with javelins and lances; he then falls to the ground, and expires with the loss of blood.

The agageer nearest Mr. Bruce presently lamed his elephant, and left him standing. Ayto Engedan, Ayto Confu, Guebra Mariam, and several others, fixed their spears in the other, before the agageer had cut his tendons. Mr. Bruce's agageer, however, having wounded the first elephant, failed in the pursuit of the second; and, being close upon him at entering the wood, he received a violent blow from a branch of a tree which the elephant had bent by his weight,

## Elephant-hunting.

weight, and, after passing, allowed it to replace itself, when it knocked down both the riders, and very much hurt the horse. This, indeed, is the great danger in elephant hunting; for some of the trees, that are dry and short, break, by the violent pressure of so immense a body moving so rapidly, and fall upon the pursuers, or across the roads. But the greatest number of these trees, being of a succulent quality, they bend without breaking, and return quickly to their former position, when they strike both horse and man so violently, that they often beat them to pieces, and scatter them upon the plain. Dexterous, too, as the riders are, the elephant sometimes reaches them with his trunk, with which he dashes the horse against the ground, and then sets his feet upon him, till he tears him limb from limb with his proboscis; a great many hunters die this way. Besides this, the soil, at this time of the year, is split into deep chasms, or cavities, by the heat of the sun, so that nothing can be more dangerous than the riding.

As soon as the elephant is slain, they cut the whole flesh off his bones into thongs, like the reins of a bridle, and hang these, like festoons, upon the branches of trees, till they become perfectly dry, without salt, and they then lay them by for their provision in the season of the rains.

There now remained but two elephants of those that had been discovered, which were a she one with a calf. The Agageer would willingly have let these alone, as the teeth of the female are very small, and the young one is of no sort of value, even for food, its flesh shrinking much upon drying. But the hunters would not be limited in their sport. The people having observed the place of her retreat, eagerly followed. She was very soon found, and as soon lamed by the Agageers; but when they came to wound her with the darts, as every one did in their turn, to their very great surprise, the young one which had been

## Elephant-hunting.

suffered to escape unheeded and unpursued, came out from the thicket apparently in great anger, running upon the horses and men with all the violence it was master of. Mr. Bruce was amazed, and as much as he ever was, upon such an occasion, afflicted, at seeing the great affection of the little animal defending its wounded mother, heedless of its own life or safety. He therefore cried to them for God's sake to spare the mother, though it was then too late; and the calf had made several attacks upon Mr. Bruce, which he avoided without difficulty. At last, making one of its attacks upon Ayto Engedan, it hurt him a little on the leg; upon which he thrust it through with his lance, as others did after, and it then fell dead before its wounded mother, whom it had so affectionately defended.

Here, says Mr. Bruce, is an example of a beast, a young one too, possessing abstracted sentiments to a very high degree. By its flight on the first appearance of the hunters, it is plain it apprehended danger to itself; it also reflected upon that of its mother, which was the cause of its return to her assistance. This affection or duty, or let us call it any thing we please, except instinct, was stronger than the fear of danger; and it must have conquered that fear by reflection before it returned, when it resolved to make its best and last efforts, for it never attempted to fly afterwards.

Mr. Bruce and his party then sought about for the buffaloes and rhinoceroses; but though there was plenty of both in the neighbourhood, they could not find them; the noise and firing in the morning having probably scared them away. One rhinoceros was only seen by a servant. They returned in the evening to a great fire, and lay all night under the shade of trees.

The next morning they were on horseback by the dawn of day in search of the rhinoceros, many of which they had heard make a very deep groan and cry



---

*Hunting of the Rhinoceros.*

---

cry as the morning approached; several of the Agageers then joined them; and after they had searched about an hour in the very thickest part of the wood, one of them rushed out with great violence, crossing the plain towards a wood of canes that was about two miles distant. But though he ran, or rather trotted, with surprising speed, considering his bulk, he was, in a very little time, transfix'd with thirty or forty javelins; which so confounded him, that he left his purpose of going to the wood, and ran into a deep hole, ditch, or ravine, without outlet, breaking above a dozen of the javelins as he entered. Here they thought he was caught as in a trap, for he had scarce room to turn; when a servant, who had a gun, standing directly over him, fired at his head, and the animal fell immediately, to all appearance dead. All those on foot now jumped in with their knives to cut him up, and they had scarcely begun, when the animal recovered so far as to rise upon his knees; happy then was the man that escaped first; and had not one of the Agageers, who was himself engaged in the ravine, cut the sinew of the hind leg as he was retreating, there would have been a very sorrowful account of the foot-hunters that day.

After having dispatched him, Mr. Bruce was curious to see what wound the shot had given, which had operated so violently upon so huge an animal; and he doubted not it was in the brain. But it had struck him no where but upon the point of the foremost horn, of which it had carried off above an inch; and this occasioned a concussion that had stunned him for a minute, till the bleeding had recovered him. Mr. Bruce preserved the horn from curiosity.

They had not gone far before a wild boar arose between Mr. Bruce and Ayto Engedan, which our traveller immediately killed with his javelin. This was the sport Mr. Bruce had been many years used to in Barbary, and was infinitely more dexterous at it than any of the present company; this put him more

upon a par with his companions, who had not failed to laugh at him, upon his horse's refusal to carry him near either to the elephant or rhinoceros.

Ammonios was a man of approved courage and conduct, and had been in all the wars of Ras Michael, and was placed about Ayto Confu, to lead the troops, curb the presumption, and check the impetuosity, of that youthful warrior. He was tall, and awkwardly made; slow in speech and motion, so much as even to excite ridicule; about sixty years of age, and more corpulent than the Abyssinians generally are; in a word, as pedantic and grave in his manner as it is possible to express. He spent his whole leisure time in reading the Scripture, nor did he willingly discourse of any thing else. He had been bred a foot soldier; and though he rode as well as many of the Abyssinians, yet, having long stirrup leathers, with iron rings at the end of them, into which he put his naked toe only instead of stirrups, he had no strength or agility on horseback, nor was his bridle such as could command his horse to stop, or wind and turn sharply among trees, though he might make a tolerable figure on a plain.

A boar, roused on our right, had wounded a horse and a footman of Ayto Confu, and then escaped. Two buffaloes were found by those on the right, one of which wounded a horse likewise. Ayto Confu, Engedan, Guebra, Mariam, and Mr. Bruce, killed the other with equal share of merit, without being in any sort of danger. All this was in little more than an hour when their sport seemed to be at the best; their horses were considerably blown, not tired, and though they were beating homewards, still they were looking very keenly for more game. Ammonios was on the left among the bushes, and some large, beautiful, tall spreading trees, close on the banks of the river Bedowi, which stands there in pools. Whether the buffalo found Ammonios, or Ammonios the buffalo, is what they could never get him

---

He is in very imminent danger.

---

him to explain to them : but he had wounded the beast slightly in the buttock, which, in return, had gored his horse, and thrown both him and it to the ground. Luckily, however, his cloak had fallen off, which the buffalo tore in pieces, and employed himself for a minute with that and with the horse, but then left them, and followed the man as soon as he saw him rise and run. Ammonios got behind one large tree, and from that to another still larger. The buffalo turned very awkwardly, but kept close in pursuit ; and there is no doubt he would have worn out their companion, who was not used to such quick motion. Ayto Engedan, who was near, and might have assisted him, was laughing, ready to die at the droll figure a man of Ammonios' grave carriage made, running and skipping about naked, with a swiftness he had never practised all his life before ; and Engedan continued calling to Confu to partake of the diversion.

The moment Mr. Bruce heard his repeated cries, he galloped out of the bushes to the place where he was, and could not help laughing at his ridiculous figure, very attentive to the beast's motions, which seemed to dodge with great address, and keep to his adversary with the utmost obstinacy. As soon as Engedan saw Mr. Bruce, he cried, " Yagoube ! for the love of Christ ! for the love of the blessed virgin ! don't interfere till Confu comes up." Confu immediately arrived, and laughed more than Engedan, but did not offer to interfere ; on the contrary, he clapped his hands, and cried, " Well done, Ammonios !" swearing he never saw so equal a match in his life. The unfortunate Ammonios had been driven from tree to tree, till he had got behind one within a few yards of the water ; but the brush-wood upon the banks, and his attention to the buffalo, hindered him from seeing how far it was below him. Nothing could be more ridiculous than to see him holding the tree with both his hands, peeping first one way, and then

## Slaughter of a huge Buffalo.

then another, to see by which the beast would turn. And well he might be on his guard; for the animal was absolutely mad, tossing up the ground with his feet both before and behind. "Sir," said Mr. Bruce to Ayto Confu, "this will be but an ugly joke to-night, if we bring home that man's corpse, killed in the very midst of us, while we were looking on." Saying this, he parted at a canter behind the trees, crying to Ammonios to throw himself into the water, when he should strike the beast; and seeing the buffalo's head turned from Mr. Bruce, at full speed, he ran the spear into the lower part of his belly, through his whole intestines, till it came out above a foot on the other side, and there he left it with a view to hinder the buffalo from turning. It was a spear which, though small in the head, had a strong, tough, seasoned shaft, which did not break by striking it against the trees and bushes, and it pained and impeded the animal's motions, till Ammonios quitting the tree, dashed through the bushes with some difficulty, and threw himself into the river. But here a danger occurred that Mr. Bruce had not foreseen. The pool was very deep, and Ammonios could not swim; so that though he escaped from the buffalo, he would infallibly have been drowned, had he not caught hold of some strong roots of a tree shooting out of the bank; and there he lay in perfect safety from the enemy till the servants went round, and brought him out of the pool on the further side.

In the mean time, the buffalo, mortally wounded, seeing his enemy had escaped, kept his eyes intent upon the hunters, who were about forty yards from him, walking backwards towards the company, with intent to turn suddenly upon the nearest horse; when Ayto Confu ordered two men with guns to shoot him through the head, and he instantly fell. The two they first killed were females; this last was a bull, and one of the largest, confessedly, that had ever been seen. Though not fat, Mr. Bruce supposes he weighed

## Description of this animal.

weighed nearer fifty than forty stone. His horns from the root, following the line of their curve, were about fifty-two inches, and nearly nine where thickest in the circumference. They were flat, not round. Ayto Confu ordered the head to be cut off, and cleared of its flesh, so that the horns and skeleton of the head only remained; this he hung up in his great hall among the probosces of elephants, and horns of rhinoceroses, with this inscription in his own language, "*Yagoube the Kipt killed this upon the Bedowi.*"

The evening of the day whereon they set out to hunt, some men arrived from Ras el Feel sent by Yasmine, with camels for their baggage, nothing but mules being used at Tcherkin. They brought word, that the Shangalla were down near the Tacazzé so that now was the time to pass without fear; that Abd el Jeleel, the former Shum of Ras el Feel, Yasmine's mortal enemy, had been seen lurking in the country near Sancaho; but as he had only four men, and was himself a known coward, it was not probable he would attempt any thing against our travellers, though it would be always better for them to keep on their guard.

Tcherkin has a market on Saturdays, in which raw cotton, cattle, honey, and coarse cotton cloths, are sold. The Shangalla formerly molested Tcherkin greatly; but for thirty years past they had done little damage. The small-pox raged so violently for a number of years among them, that it greatly diminished their numbers, and consequently their power of troubling their neighbours.

On Wednesday the eighth of January, Mr. Bruce having rectified his quadrant with great attention, found the latitude of Tcherkin, to be  $13^{\circ} 7' 35''$  north. But though from that time he was ready to depart, he could not possibly get disengaged from his friends, but by a composition, which was, that he should stay till the 15th, the day before Ozoro Esther and her company

company were to set out on their return to Gondar ; and that they, on their part, should suffer Mr. Bruce to depart on that day, without further persuasion, or throwing any obstacle whatever in his way.

On the morning of the 15th of January, they left Tcherkin, and entered immediately among thick woods ; but proceeded very slowly, the road being bad and unknown, if it could be called a road, and their camels overloaded.

On the 17th in the morning, they came to Sancaho, an old frontier territory of Abyssinia. The town may consist of about 300 huts or houses, neatly built of canes, and curiously thatched with leaves of the same. It rises in the midst of a plain, and resembles in shape Tcherkin Amba, though much larger : a considerable district all around belongs to it, of wilds and woods, if such as these, abandoned entirely to wild beasts, can be said to belong to any man. The east end slopes with rather a steep descent into the plain ; and though that is a narrow winding road, seemingly the work of art, being obstructed at turns by huge stones, and at different stages, for the purpose of defence by guns or arrows ; all the other sides of the rock are perpendicular precipices. The inhabitants of the town are Baasa, a race of Shangalla, converted to the Mahometan religion.

On the 20th, our travellers proceeded but a mile and a half ; their beasts and themselves being equally fatigued, and their clothes torn all to rags, when they arrived at Guanjook, which is a very delightful spot by the river side ; small woods of very high trees, interspersed with very beautiful lawns ; several fields also cultivated with cotton ; variety of game (especially Guinea fowls, in great abundance) and, upon every tree, parroquets, of all the different kinds and colours, compose the beauties of Guanjook. Mr. Bruce saw no parrots, and supposes there is none ; but on firing a gun, the first probably ever heard in those woods, there was such a screaming of other birds on

## Hor-Cacamoot.

all sides, some flying to the place whence the noise came, and some flying from it, that it was impossible to hear distinctly any other sound.

They continued their journey from thence, and at a quarter after one came to Mariam-Ohha, and at half past three arrived at Hor-Cacamoot. Hor, in that country, signifies the dry deep bed of a torrent, which has ceased to run; and Cacamoot, the shade of death; so that Yasine's village, where they now took up their quarters, is called the Valley of the Shadow of Death; A bad omen for weak and wandering travellers as they were, surrounded by a multitude of dangers, and so far from home, that there seemed to be but one that could bring them thither. They trusted in him, and he did deliver them.

Hor-Cacamoot is situated in a plain in the midst of a wood, so much only of which has been cleared away as to make room for the miserable huts of which it consists, and for the small spots of ground on which they sow mashilla, or maize, to furnish them with bread. Their other food consists entirely of the flesh of the elephant and rhinoceros, and chiefly of the former, for the trouble of hunting the elephant is not greater than chasing the rhinoceros, and the difference of grain is much superior. The elephant has a greater quantity of better flesh, while his large teeth are very valuable, and afford a ready price every where. The inhabitants being little acquainted with the use of fire-arms, the smaller game of the deer kind are not much molested, unless by the wild Shangalla, who make use of bows and arrows, so that these animals are increased beyond imagination.

Ras el Feel consisted once of thirty-nine villages. All the Arabs of Atbara resorted to them with butter, honey, horses, gold, and many other commodities; and the Shekh of Atbara, living upon the frontier of Sennaar, entertained a constant good correspondence with the Shekh of Ras el Feel, to whom he sent yearly a Dongola horse, two razors, and two dogs.

## Sancaho.

The Shekh of Ras el Feel, in return, gave him a mule and a female slave; and the effect of this intercourse was, to keep all the intermediate Arabs in their duty. But since the expedition of Yasous II. against Sennaar, no peace has ever subsisted between the two states; on the contrary, all the Arabs that assisted the king, and were defeated with him, pay tribute no longer to Sennaar, but live on the frontiers of Abyssinia, and are protected there.

On the 17th of March, they set out from Hor-Cacamoot on their journey to Teawa, the capital of the province of Atbara, and came to Sancaho, an old frontier territory of Abyssinia. The town may consist of about 300 huts, or houses, neatly built of canes, and curiously thatched with leaves of the same. The inhabitants of the town are Baasa, a race of Shangalla, converted to the Mahometan religion: it is an absolute government, has a nagareet, or kettle-drum for proclamations, yet is understood to be inferior to Ras el Feel; and dependant on it, and always subject to that nobleman, who is Kasmoli, of Ras el Feel. Gimbaro, the Erbab or chief, was the tallest and stoutest man of his nation, about six feet six inches high, and strongly made in proportion; hunted always on foot, and was said, among his people, to have singly killed elephants with one blow of his spear. The features of his face might well be called hideous; he paid his part of the revenue in buffaloes' hides, of which the best shields were made; and with elephant's teeth, and rhinoceros's horns, used for the handles of the crooked knives, which the Abyssinians carry at their girdles. All the inhabitants of Sancaho are hunters of elephants, whose flesh is their principal food.

On the 18th, they continued their journey through almost impenetrable woods, full of thorns; till they came to the bed of a torrent. Though in appearance dry, upon digging with their hands in the loose sand, they here found great plenty of fresh water exceed-



ingly well tasted, being sheltered by projecting rocks from the action of the sun. This is called Surf el Shekh. Here they filled their girbas, for there is very little good water between this place and Teawa. A girba is an ox skin squared, and the edges sewed together very artificially by a double seam, which does not let out water, much resembling that upon the best English cricket balls. An opening is left in the top of the girba, in the same manner as the bung-hole of a cask. Around this the skin is gathered to the size of a large handful, which, when the girba is full of water, is tied round with whip-cord. These girbas not uncommonly contain about sixty gallons each, and two of them are the load of a camel. They are then all besmeared on the outside with grease, as well to hinder the water from oozing through, as to prevent its being evaporated by the action of the sun upon the girba, which in fact happened to them twice, so as to put them in imminent danger of perishing with thirst.

Yasine had provided a camel and two girbas, as well as every other provision necessary for them, till they should arrive at Teawa. Surf el Shekh is the boundary of Ras el Feel. Here Mr. Bruce took an affectionate leave of his friend Yasine, who, with all his attendants, shewed, at parting, that love and attachment they had constantly preserved to Mr. Bruce since their first acquaintance.

On the 20th, our travellers arrived at Imserha, and thence proceeded to Rashid. They were now flying for their lives; the Simoom, or hot-wind, having struck them not long after they had left Imserha, and the whole company, except Mr. Bruce, fell sick with the quantity of poisonous vapour that they had imbibed. Though Rashid is one of the most dangerous halting-places between Ras el Feel and Sennaar, yet they were so enervated, their stomachs so weak, and their head-achs so violent, that they could not pitch their tent; but, each wrapping himself in his cloak, resigned himself immedi-

---

The pernicious effects of the Simoom.

---

ately to sleep under the cool shade of the large trees, invited by the pleasant breeze from the north, which seemed to be merely local, confined to this small grove, created probably by the vicinity of the water, and the agitation they had occasioned in it.

In this helpless state to which they were reduced, Mr. Bruce alone continued not weakened by the Simoom, nor overcome by sleep. A Ganjar Arab, who drove an ass laden with salt, took this opportunity of stealing one of the mules, together with a lance and shield belonging to one of Mr. Bruce's servants. The country was so woody, and he had so much the advantage of them in point of time, and they were in so weak and discouraged a state, that it was thought in vain to pursue him one step. So he got off with his booty, unless he was intercepted by some of those wild beasts, which he would find every where in his way, whether he returned to Ras el Féel, or the frontiers of Kaura, his own country.

Having refreshed themselves with a little sleep, the next thing was to fill their girbas, or skins, with water. But before they attempted this, Mr. Bruce thought to try an experiment of mixing about twenty drops of spirit of nitre in a horn of water about the size of an ordinary tumbler. This he found greatly refreshed him, though his head-ache still continued. It had a much better effect upon his servants, to whom he gave it; for they all seemed immediately recovered, and their spirits much more so, from the reflection that they had with them a remedy they could trust to, if they should again be so unfortunate as to meet this poisonous wind or vapour.

On the 21st, upon approaching a pool of water, though yet at some distance from it, Mr. Bruce's servants sent him word to come up speedily, and to bring fire-arms with him. A lion had killed a deer of the species called *ariel*, and had eaten part of it; but retired in consequence of the noise which the company had made in alighting. Five or six hyænas had next seized

## Dispersion of several hyænas.

seized the carcase, and several others were just arriving to join them. Upon receiving the summons, Mr. Bruce hastened forward, carrying with him a musquet, bayonet, and a ship-blunderbuss, loaded with about forty small bullets. He crept through the bushes, and under banks as near to the voracious animals as possible; but this precaution seemed entirely superfluous; for though they observed him approaching, they shewed no disposition to leave their prey; but looked at him, raising the bristles on their backs, shaking themselves, and giving a short but terrible grunt. They then fell to their repast again, as if they meant to dispatch their deer first, and then to settle their affairs with the intruder.

Mr. Bruce now began to repent having ventured alone so near; but knowing that with his short weapon, the execution depended in a great measure on the distance, he crept a little nearer still, and at last gained as favorable a position as possible behind the root of a large tree which had fallen into the lake. He now levelled his blunderbuss at the middle of the group, which were feeding voraciously, like as many swine, with a considerable noise, and in a civil war with each other. Two of them fell dead on the spot; two others died at the distance of about twenty yards; and all the rest that could escape fled without looking back, or shewing the least sign of resentment.

No sooner were the hyænas dispersed, than about twenty small foxes, and a flock of several hundred Guinea fowls, came up from the inside of the pool. The fowls lighted immediately, and ran back into the water, and the foxes quickly retired into the woods. Whether they had assembled with a view of getting a share of the deer, an animal of this kind being generally attendant upon the lion, or whether, as is most probable, the Guinea-fowls were their object, our traveller could not decide; but from their number he suspected the latter, as never more than one at a time is remarked to accompany the lion.

## Teawa.

On the 23d, which was the seventh day since they had left Ras el Feel, they arrived at Teawa, the principal village and residence of the Shekh of Atbara, between three and four miles from the ruins of Garigana. The whole distance, then, from Hor-Cacamoote, may be about 65 miles to Teawa, as near as Mr. Bruce then could compute.

The strength of Teawa was about twenty-five horse, of which about ten were armed with coats of mail. They had about a dozen of fire-locks, very contemptible from the order in which they were kept, and still more so from the hands that bore them. The rest of the inhabitants might amount to twelve hundred men, naked, miserable, and despicable Arabs, like the rest of those that live in villages, who are much inferior in courage to the Arabs that dwell in tents: weak as its state was, it was the seat of government, and, as such, a certain degree of reverence attended it. Such was the state of Teawa. Its consequence was only to remain till the Daveina should resolve to attack it, when its corn fields being burnt and destroyed in a night by a multitude of horsemen, the bones of its inhabitants scattered upon the earth would be all its remains.

Mr. Bruce had not been long at Teawa, before he received the most unequivocal evidence of the treacherous designs of the Shekh Fidele; who before his departure from Abyssinia had sent him the assurances of friendship and protection. After several interviews, he thought fit to put Mr. Bruce's medical talents to the test, and after he had himself experienced the benefit from the remedies prescribed by him, he sent for our traveller to visit two of his wives. Mr. Bruce attended; and was led by the Shekh through several well-proportioned apartments, but meanly furnished, slovenly, and in bad order. This was the part of the house which belonged to himself, and formed one side of a square, which they crossed, and then entered several apartments furnished in a much better style,

---

Great beauty of one of the Shekh of Fidele's wives.

---

style, the floors being all covered with Turkey carpets. In an alcove sat one of the Shekh's wives upon the ground, surrounded by a number of black slaves. Her face was uncovered; and Mr. Bruce, first putting his hand to his lips, touched her fingers with the ends of his own. The Shekh had meanwhile brought a second wife from another apartment, and placed her beside the first. They were both past the middle age, and had never been handsome; one of them, as our traveller afterwards learned, was the daughter of Shekh Adelan, prime minister to the King of Sennaar. They were attended by a multitude of slaves, of whom, at Mr. Bruce's desire, the room was cleared by Fidele, who taking up a short whip or switch, which lay at hand, soon put the unfortunate females to the rout, and immediately went away himself. During the operation of the medicine which he administered, and which was nothing more than an emetic, Mr. Bruce observed a genteel female figure, who till then had appeared covered, unveil her face and head down to the shoulders: and soon after one of the slaves, her attendant, as in play, pulled off the remaining part of the veil which covered her. Mr. Bruce was completely astonished at her beauty. Her hair, which was not woolly, but long, and in great quantity, was braided and twisted round like a crown upon the top of her head, ornamented with beads, and the small white Guinea-shells, commonly called blackamoors' teeth. She had plain rings of gold in her ears, and four rows of gold chain round her neck, to which was hung a number of sequins. The rest of her dress was a blue shift, which hung loosely about her, and covered her down to the feet, though it was not very closely disposed all below her neck. She was the tallest of the middle size; not yet fifteen; all her features faultless; and indeed, adds Mr. Bruce, they might have served alone for the study of a painter all his life, if he was in search of absolute beauty. From these ladies, Mr. Bruce afterwards experienced

experienced much kindness during the persecutions which he had to suffer from the Shekh.

The latter conceiving that our traveller was possessed of great wealth, had made a demand of 2,000 piastres, and had even gone so far as to hint to Soliman, one of Mr. Bruce's Moorish attendants; that if he would help to rob and murder his master, he should share the booty with him. The day after he had made this proposal, he desired to see Mr. Bruce in the evening. Apprized of his villainous intentions, the latter resolved to go armed for fear of the worst, but to conceal his weapons so as to give no umbrage. He had a small Brescian blunderbuss, which had a joint in the stock, so that it folded double, hung by a hook to a thin belt under his left arm, close to his side quite unperceived like a cutlass. He likewise took a pair of pistols in his girdle, and his knife as usual.

He was attended by Hagi Ismael, a Turk, Soliman, and two other Moorish servants, who also took their fire-arms and swords along with them: but remained at the outer door of the Shekh's house, while Mr. Bruce went in alone.

He found Fidele sitting in a spacious room, in an alcove, on a large broad sofa like a bed, with India curtains gathered on each side into festoons. He called to a black boy who attended him, in a very surly tone, to bring him a pipe; and, in much the same voice, said to Mr. Bruce, "What! alone?" Our traveller replied, "Yes, what are your commands with me?" Mr. Bruce saw he either was, or affected to be drunk, and which ever was the case, he knew it would lead to mischief; he therefore repented heartily of having come into the house alone.

After he had taken two whiffs of his pipe, and the slave had left the room, "Are you prepared?" said he; have you brought the *needful* along with you?" Mr. Bruce wished to have occasion to join Soliman, his servant, and answered, "My servants are at the outer door, and have the vomit you wanted." "D—n

## Treachery of the Shekh Fidele.

you and the vomit too, said he with great passion, I want money, and not poison. Where are your piastres?" "I am a bad person," replied Mr. Bruce, "to furnish you with either. I have neither money nor poison; but I advise you to drink a little warm water to clear your stomach, cool your head, and then lie down and compose yourself; I will see you to-morrow morning." Mr. Bruce was going out. "Hakim," said he, "infidel, or devil, or whatever is your name, hearken to what I say. Consider where you are; this is the room where Mek Baady, a king, was slain by the hand of my father; look at his blood, where it has stained the floor, which never could be washed out. I am informed you have 20,000 piastres in gold with you; either give me 2000 before you go out of this chamber, or you shall die: I will put you to death with my own hand." Upon this he took up his sword, that was lying at the head of his sofa, and drawing it with a bravado, threw the scabbard into the middle of the room; and, tucking the sleeve of his shirt above his elbow like a butcher, said, "I wait your answer."

Mr. Bruce now stepped one pace backwards, and held the little blunderbuss in his hand, without taking it off the belt. He said, in a firm tone of voice, "This is my answer: I am not a man, as I told you before, to die like a beast by the hand of a drunkard; on your life, I charge you stir not from your sofa." He had no need to give this injunction; he heard the noise which the closing the joint in the stock of the blunderbuss made, and thought he had cocked it, and was instantly to fire. He let his sword drop, and threw himself on his back on his sofa, crying, "For God's sake, Hakim, I was but jesting." At the same time, with all his might, he cried, "Brahim! Mahomet! El coom! El coom!"—"If one of your servants approach me," said Mr. Bruce, "that instant I will blow you to pieces; not one of them shall enter this room till they bring in my servants with them; I

## Treachery of the Shekh Fidele.

have a number of them armed at your gate, who will break in the instant they hear me fire."

The women had come to the door, and Mr. Bruce's servants were admitted, each having a blunderbuss in his hand, and pistols at his girdle. They were now greatly an overmatch for the Shekh, who sat far back on the sofa, and pretended that all he had done was in joke; in which his servants joined, and a very confused desultory discourse followed, till the Turk, she-riffe Ismael, happened to observe the shekh's scabbard of his sword thrown upon the floor, on which he fell into a violent fit of laughter. He endeavored to make the Shekh understand, that drunkards and cowards had more need of the scabbard than the sword; that he, Fidele, and the other drunkard that came to their house two or three nights before, who said he was Shekh of Jehaina, were just possessed of the same portion of courage and insolence.

As no good could be expected from this expostulation, Mr. Bruce stopt it, and took his leave, desiring the Shekh to go to bed and compose himself, and not try any more of these experiments, which would certainly end in his shame, if not in his punishment. He made no answer, only wished them good night.

Mr. Bruce and his servants went to the door, through the several apartments, very much upon their guard; for there was no person to light them out, and they were afraid of some treachery or ambush in the antichamber and dark passages: but they met nobody; and were, even at the outer-gate, obliged to open the door themselves. Without the gate, there were about twenty people gathered together, but none of them with arms; and, by the half words and expressions they made use of, they could judge they were not the Shekh's friends. They followed them for a little, but dispersed before they arrived at their house.

They had scarce got rid of this real danger, when  
the



---

Insalubrious quality of the water at Teawa.

---

the apprehension of an imaginary one struck them violently. The water at Teawa is stagnant in pools, and exceedingly bad. Either that or the bouza, a kind of new beer which they sent them with their meat, had given all of them, at the same time, a violent diarrhœa, and Mr. Bruce was tormented with a perpetual thirst ever since they had been overtaken by the simoom; and the bouza being acid was not only more agreeable, but, he thought, relieved him more than bad water; in this, therefore, he certainly had exceeded. When they found they were all taken ill at the same time, it came into their heads that Shekh Fidele had given them poison in their dinner, and they were very much perplexed what they should do the next day. None of them, therefore, tasted the meat sent them; when at night, their friend the black slave came, and to her they frankly told their doubts. The poor creature fell into such violent fits of laughing, which followed so close the one upon the other, and lasted so long, that Mr. Bruce feared she would have expired upon the spot. "It is the water," said she: "it does so to all strangers;" and then she fell into another great fit of laughter. "Child," answered Mr. Bruce, "you know the Shekh is not our friend, and there is no easier way to get rid of us than by poison, as we eat every thing that comes from you without fear." "And so you may," said she; "the Shekh could do no such thing without our knowledge; and we would rather all be burnt alive than be guilty of so vile an action. Besides," said she, "this is not like Habesh, where both meat and drink, brought to you, are tasted by the bearer before you use them. There is no such thing as poison in Atbara; the lance and the knife in the field, that is the manner in which they kill one another here."

They then shewed her their dinner uneaten, and she again fell into a violent fit of laughter, and took the meat away that she might warm it; and they heard her laughing all the way as she went by herself. She

---

---

Beyla.

---

---

was not long in returning with provisions in plenty, and told them, that her mistresses never were so diverted in their lives, and that she left them still laughing.

During the whole of Mr. Bruce's stay at Teawa, the behaviour of Fidele was all of a piece, and it is probable our traveller would have finished his peregrinations in that place, had not some of his powerful friends interested themselves in his security. However, after various impediments in the evening of the 18th of April, he took leave of the Shekh to proceed on his journey, in company with a servant sent by Shekh Adelan, and another by the king to conduct our traveller to Sennaar. The day had been immoderately hot, and he had resolved to travel all night, though he did not say so to the Shekh, who advised him to sleep at Imgededema, where there was fresh water. But his party had taken a girba of water with them, or rather, in case of accident, a little in each of the three girbas.

Their journey, for the first seven hours, was through a barren, bare, and sandy plain, without finding a vestige of any living creature, without water, and without grass; a country that seemed under the immediate curse of Heaven. However, after a most disagreeable journey, on the 19th, at eight in the evening, they arrived at Beyla. Mr. Bruce found Beyla to be in lat.  $13^{\circ} 42' 4''$ ; that is, about eleven miles west of Teawa, and thirty-one and a half miles due south. They were met by Mahomet, the Shekh, at the very entrance of the town. He said, he looked upon them as risen from the dead; that they must be good people, and particularly under the care of Providence, to have escaped the many snares the Shekh of Atbara had laid for them. Mahomet, the Shekh, had provided every sort of refreshment possible for them, and, thinking they could not live without it, he had ordered sugar for them from Sennaar. Honey for the most part hitherto had been its substitute.

---

Mr. Bruce attacked with the ague.

---

tute. They had a good comfortable supper ; as fine wheat-bread as ever Mr. Bruce ate in his life, brought from Sennaar, as also rice ; in a word, every thing that their kind landlord could contribute to their plentiful and hospitable entertainment.

Our traveller's whole company was full of joy, to which the Shekh greatly encouraged them ; and, if there was any alloy to the happiness, it was the seeing that Mr. Bruce did not partake of it. Symptoms of an aguish disorder had been hanging about him for several days. He found the greatest repugnance, or nausea, at the smell of warm meat ; and, having a violent head-ache, he insisted upon going to bed supperless, after having drank a quantity of warm water by way of emetic. Being exceedingly tired, he soon fell sound asleep, having first taken some drops of a strong spirituous tincture of the bark which he had prepared at Gondar, resolving, if he found any remission, as he then did, to take several good doses of the bark in powder on the morrow, beginning at day-break, which he accordingly did with its usual success.

On the 20th of April, a little after the dawn of day, the Shekh, in great anxiety, came to the place where Mr. Bruce was lying, upon a tanned buffaloe's hide, on the ground. His sorrow was soon turned into joy when he found him quite recovered from his illness. He had taken the bark, and expressed a desire of eating a hearty breakfast of rice, which was immediately prepared for him.

The Shekh of Beyla was an implicit believer in medicine. Seeing him take some drops of the tincture before coffee, he insisted upon pledging Mr. Bruce, and would have willingly emptied the whole bottle. The Shekh, having suffered great agony with his own complaint, had passed some small stones, and was greatly better, as he said, for the soap-pills which our traveller had sent him. Mr. Bruce put him in a way to prepare these, as also his  
lime-

---

The Shekh of Beyla's reception of Mr. Bruce.

---

lime-water. It was impossible to have done any favour for him equal to this, as his agony had been so great.

It was now the time to give the Shekh a present, and Mr. Bruce had prepared one for him, such as he very well deserved; but no intreaty, nor any means he could use, could prevail upon him to accept of the merest trifle. On the contrary, he solemnly swore, that if Mr. Bruce importuned him further, he would get upon his horse and go into the country. All that he desired, and that too as a favour, was, that when Mr. Bruce had rested at Sennaar, he might come and consult him further as to his complaints, for which he promised he should bring a recompence with him.

Though Mr. Bruce was much pleased with his reception here, he determined to press on to Sennaar before affairs there were in a desperate situation, or some scheme of mischief should be contrived by Fidele. They had again a large and plentiful dinner, and a quantity of bousa; venison of several different species of the antelope or deer kind, and Guinea fowls, boiled with rice, the best part of their fare, for the venison smelled and tasted strongly of musk. This was the provision made by the Shekh's two sons, boys about fourteen or fifteen years old, who had got each of them a gun with a matchlock, and whose favour Mr. Bruce secured to a very high degree, by giving them some good gunpowder, and plenty of small leaden bullets.

In the afternoon, they walked out to see the village, which is a very pleasant one, situated upon the bottom of a hill, covered with wood, all the rest flat before it. Through this plain there are many large timber trees, planted in rows, and joined with high hedges, as in Europe, forming inclosures for keeping cattle; but of these they saw none, as they had been moved to the Dender for fear of the flies. There is no water at Beyla but what is got from deep wells.

## Baherie.

wells. Large plantations of Indian corn are every where about the town. The inhabitants are in continual apprehension from the Arabs Daveina at Sim Sim, about 40 miles south-east from them ; and from another powerful race called Wed abd el Gin, *i. e.* *Son of the slaves of the Devil*, who live to the south-west of them, between the Dender and the Nile. Beyla is another frontier town of Sennaar, on the side of Sim Sim ; and between Teawa and this, on the Sennaar side, and Ras el Feel, Nara, and Tchelga, upon the Abyssinian side, all is desert and waste, the Arabs only suffering the water to remain there without villages near it, that they and their flocks may come at certain seasons while the grass grows, and the pools or springs fill elsewhere.

Though Mr. Bruce went early to bed with full determination to set out by day-break, yet he found it was impossible to put his design in execution, or get from the hands of their kind landlord. One of their girbas seemed to fail, and needed to be repaired, as if nothing good could come from the Shekh of Atbara.

On the 21st of April, they left Beyla at three o'clock in the afternoon, and proceeded through a very pleasant, flat country, but without water ; there had been none in their way nearer than the river Rahad. About eleven at night they alighted in a wood : The place is called Baherie, as near as they could compute, nine miles from Beyla.

On the 22d, at half past five o'clock in the morning, they left Baherie, still continuing westward, and at nine they came to the banks of the Rahad. The ford is called Tchir Chaira. The river itself was now standing in pools, the water foul, stinking, and covered with a green mantle ; the bottom soft and muddy, but there was no choice. The water at Beyla was so bad, that they took only as much as was absolutely necessary till they arrived at running water from the Rahad.

## The Dendera.

On the 23d they met several men, on horseback and on foot, belonging to the tribe of Cohala, coming out from among the bushes, who endeavoured to carry off one of their camels. They indeed were somewhat alarmed, and were going to prepare for resistance. The camel they had taken away had on it the king's and Shekh Adelan's presents, and some other things for their future need. Their clothes, too, books, and papers, were upon the same camel. However, as this was only a contrivance of the king's servant to extort a present from Mr. Bruce, the matter was easily got over, and the camel restored.

On the 24th, they came to the river Dender, standing now in pools, but by the vast wideness of its banks, and the great deepness of its bed, all of white sand, it should seem that in time of rain it will contain nearly as much water as the Nile. The banks are every where thickly overgrown with the rack and jujeb-tree, especially the latter. The wood, which had continued mostly from Beyla, here failed entirely, and reached no further towards Sennaar. These two sorts of trees, however, were in very great beauty, and of a prodigious size.

In the evening, they set out from a shady place of repose on the banks of the Dender, through a large plain, with not a tree before them; but they presently found themselves encompassed with a number of villages, nearly of a size, and placed at equal distances in form of a semi-circle, the roofs of the houses in shape of cones, as are all those within the rains. The plain was all of a red, soapy earth, and the corn just sown. This whole country is in perpetual cultivation; and, though at this time it had a bare look, would no doubt have a magnificent one when waving with grain. At nine they halted at a village of Pagan Nuba. These are all soldiers of the Mek of Sennaar, cantoned in these villages, which, at the distance of four or five miles, surround the whole capital. They are either purchased or taken by force from Tazuelo,

## The Nuba.

zuelo, and the provinces to the south upon the mountains Dyre and Tegla. Having settlements and provisions given them, as also arms put into their hands, they never wish to desert, but live a very domestic and sober life.

They pay adoration to the moon; and that their worship is formed with pleasure and satisfaction, is obvious every night that she shines. Coming out from the darkness of their huts, they say a few words upon seeing her brightness, and testify great joy, by motions of their feet and hands, at the first appearance of the new moon. Mr. Bruce never saw them pay any attention to the sun, either rising or setting, advancing to or receding from the meridian; but, as far as he could learn, they worship a tree; and likewise a stone, though he never could find out what tree or stone it was, only that it did not exist in the country of Sennaar, but in that where they were born. Their priests seemed to have great influence over them, but through fear only, and not from affection. They are distinguished by thick copper bracelets about their wrists, as also sometimes one, and sometimes two about their ankles.

On the 25th, at four o'clock in the afternoon, they set out from the villages of the Nuba, intending to arrive at Basboch, where is the ferry over the Nile; but they had scarcely advanced two miles into the plain, when they were inclosed by a violent whirlwind, or what is called at sea the water-spout. The plain was red earth, which had been plentifully moistened by a shower in the night-time. The unfortunate camel that had been taken by the Cohala seemed to be nearly in the centre of its vortex. It was lifted up and thrown down at a considerable distance, and several of its ribs broken. Although, as far as Mr. Bruce could guess, he was not near the centre, it whirled him off his feet, and threw him down upon his face, so as to make his nose gush out with blood. Two of the servants likewise had the

## The Nuba.

same fate. It plastered them all over with mud, almost as smoothly as could have been done with a towel. It took away Mr. Bruce's sense and breathing for an instant, and his mouth and nose were full of mud when he recovered. He guesses the sphere of its action to be about 200 feet. It demolished one half of a small hut, as if it had been cut through with a knife, and dispersed the materials all over the plain, leaving the other half standing.

As soon as they recovered themselves, they took refuge in a village, from fear only, for they saw no vestige of any other whirlwind. It involved a great quantity of rain; which the Nuba of the villages told them was very fortunate, as it portended good luck to them, and a prosperous journey; for they said, that had dust and sand arisen with the whirlwind, in the same proportion it would have done had not the earth been moistened, they would all infallibly have been suffocated; and they cautioned them, by saying, that tempests were very frequent in the beginning and end of the rainy season, and whenever they should see one of them coming, to fall down upon their faces, keeping their lips close to the ground, and so let it pass; and thus it would neither have power to carry them off their feet, nor suffocate them, which was the ordinary case.

Their kind landlords, the Nuba, gave them a hearty welcome, and helped them to wash their clothes first, and then to dry them. When Mr. Bruce was stripped naked, they saw the blood running from his nose, and said, they could not have thought that one so white as he was could have been capable of bleeding. They gave them a piece of roasted hog, which they ate, (except Ismael and the Mahometans) very much to the satisfaction of the Nuba. On the other hand, as their camel was lame, they ordered one of their Mahometan servants to kill it, and take as much of it as would serve themselves that night; they also provided against wanting themselves the next day. The rest they



## The Nuba.

they gave among their new acquired acquaintance, the Nuba of the village, who did not fail to make a feast upon it for several days after ; and, in recompence for their liberality, they provided them with a large jar of bouza, not very good, indeed, but better than the well-water. This Mr. Bruce repaid by tobacco, beads, pepper, and stibium, which he saw plainly was infinitely more than they expected. Although they had been a good deal surprised at the sudden and violent effects of the whirlwind of that day, and severely felt the bruises it had occasioned, yet they passed a very social and agreeable evening. Mr. Bruce had seldom, in his life, upon a journey, passed a more comfortable night. He had a very neat, clean hut, entirely to himself, and a Greek servant that sat near him. Some of the Nuba watched for them all night, and took care of their beasts and baggage. They sung and replied to one another alternately, in notes full of pleasant melody, till Mr. Bruce fell fast asleep, involuntarily, and with regret ; for, though bruised, the travellers were not fatigued, but rather discouraged, having gone no further than two miles that day.

The landlord of the hut where Mr. Bruce was asleep, having prepared for their safety and that of their baggage, thought himself bound in duty to go and give immediate information to the prime minister of the unexpected guests that then occupied his house. He found Adelan at supper, but was immediately admitted, and a variety of questions asked him, which he answered fully. He described their colour, their number, the unusual size and number of their fire-arms, the poorness of their attire, and, above all, their great cheerfulness, quietness, and affability ; their being contented with eating any thing, and in particular mentioned the hog's flesh. One man then present, testifying abhorrence of this, Adelan said of Mr. Bruce to their landlord, " Why, he is a soldier and a Kafr like yourself. A soldier and a Kafr, when

---

---

Basboch.

---

---

travelling in a strange country, should eat every thing, and so does every other man that is wise ; has he not a servant of mine with him ?” He answered, “ Yes, and a servant of the king too ; but he had left them, and was gone forward to Sennaar.” “ Go you with them,” said he, “ and stay with them at Basboch till I have time to send for them to town.” The man had returned from Aira long before our travellers arose, and told them the conversation, which was great comfort to them all ; for they were not much pleased with the king’s servant going before, as they had every reason to think he was disaffected towards them.

On the 26th, at six o’clock in the morning, they set out from this village of Nuba, their way being still across an immense plain. All the morning there were terrible storms of thunder and lightning, some rain, and one shower, of so large drops that it wet them to the skin in an instant. It was quite calm, and every drop fell perpendicularly upon them. Mr. Bruce thinks he never in his life felt so cold a rain, yet it was not disagreeable ; for the day was close and hot, and they should have wished every now and then to have had a moderate refrigeration ; this, however, was rather too abundant. The villages of the Nuba lay, on all sides, throughout this plain. At nine o’clock they arrived at Basboch, which is a large collection of huts of these people, and has the appearance of a town.

The governor, a venerable old man about seventy, who was so feeble that he could scarcely walk, received them with great complacency, only saying, when he took Mr. Bruce by the hand, “ O Christian ! what dost thou, at such a time, in such a country ?” Mr. Bruce was surprised at the politeness of his speech, when he called him Nazarani, the civil term for Christian in the east ; whereas Infidel is the general term among these brutish people ; but he found that he had been several times at Cairo. Mr. Bruce had

---

---

Sennaar.

---

---

had here a very clean and comfortable hut to lodge in, though his party were sparingly supplied with provisions all the time they were there, but never were suffered to fast a whole day together.

Basboch is situated on the eastern bank of the Nile, not a quarter of a mile from the ford below. The river here runs north and south; towards the sides it is shallow, but deep in the middle of the current; and in this part it is much infested with crocodiles. Sennaar is two miles and a half S. S. W. of it. They heard the evening drum very distinctly, and not without anxiety, when they reflected to what a brutish people, according to all accounts, they were about to trust themselves.

On the 29th, leave was sent them to enter Sennaar. It was not without some difficulty that Mr. Bruce got his quadrant and heavy baggage safely carried down the hill, for the banks are very steep to the edge of the water. The intention of their assistants was to slide the quadrant down the hill, in its case, which would have utterly destroyed it; and as their boat was but a very indifferent embarkation it was obliged to make several turns to and fro before they got all their several packages landed on the western side.

---

---



---

## CHAPTER VIII.

---



---

Interviews with the King of Sennaar—Visit to Shekh Adelan—Description of the King's wives—Government of Sennaar—Manners of the Inhabitants—Provinces—Military Force—Distressed situation of the author—Departure from Sennaar—Reception at Chendi by Sittina—Interviews with her—Journey through the Desert—Provision for the Journey—Moving Pillars of Sand—The Simoom—Distress in the Desert—The Camels die of fatigue—The Author is obliged to abandon his baggage—Arrival at Assouan—Cairo—Alexandria—Marseilles.

---

ON his arrival at Sennaar Mr. Bruce was conducted by Adelan's servant to a very spacious good house belonging to the Shekh himself, having two stories, a long quarter of a mile from the king's palace. He left a message for our traveller to repose himself, and in a day or two to wait upon the king. This he resolved to comply with most exactly; but the very next morning, the 30th of April, there came a servant from the palace so summon him to wait upon the king, which he immediately obeyed. Mr. Bruce took with him three servants, black Soliman, Ismael the Turk, and his Græek servant Michael. The palace covers a prodigious deal of ground. It is all of one story, built of clay, and the floors of earth. The chambers through which they passed weré all unfurnished, and seemed as if a great many of them had formerly been destined as barracks for soldiers, of whom Mr. Bruce did not see above fifty on guard. The king was in a small room, not twenty feet square, to which they ascended by two short flights of narrow steps. The floor of the room was covered with broad square tiles; over it was laid a Persian carpet, and  
the

---

The king of Seanaar.

---

the walls were hung with tapestry of the same country ; the whole very well kept and in good order.

The king was sitting upon a mattress laid on the ground, which was likewise covered with a Persian carpet, and round him was a number of cushions of Venetian cloth of gold. His dress did not correspond with this magnificence, for it was nothing but a large loose shirt, of Surat blue cotton cloth, which seemed not to differ from the same worn by his servants, except that, all around the edges of it, the seams were double stitched with white silk, and likewise round the neck. His head was uncovered ; he wore his own short black hair, and was as white in colour as an Arab. He seemed to be a man about thirty-four ; his feet were bare, but covered by his shirt. He had a very plebeian countenance, on which was stamped no decided character ; but Mr. Bruce should have guessed him to be a soft, timid, irresolute man. At our traveller's coming forward and kissing his hand, he looked at him for a minute as if undetermined what to say. He then asked for an Abyssinian interpreter, as there are many of these about the palace. On which Mr. Bruce said to him in Arabic, " I apprehend I understand as much of that language as will enable me to answer any question you have to put to me." Upon which he turned to the people that were with him, " Downright Arabic, indeed ! You did not learn that language in Habesh ?" said he to Mr. Bruce, who answered, " No ; I have been in Egypt, Turkey, and Arabia, where I learned it ; but I have likewise often spoken it in Abyssinia, where Greek, Turkish, and several other languages, are used." He said, " Impossible ! he did not think they knew any thing of languages, excepting their own, in Abyssinia."

There were sitting in the side of the room opposite to him, four men dressed in white cotton shirts, with a white shawl covering their heads and part of their faces, by which it was known they were religious

---

The king of Sennaar.

---

men, or men of learning, or of the law. One of these answered the king's doubt of the Abyssinians' knowledge in languages. "They have languages enough, and you know that Habesh is called the paradise of asses." During this conversation, Mr. Bruce took the sherriffe of Mecca's letter, also one from the king of Abyssinia; he gave him the king's first, and then the sherriffe's. He took them both as Mr. Bruce gave them, but laid aside the king's upon a cushion till he had read the sherriffe's. After this he read the king's, and called immediately again for an Abyssinian interpreter; upon which Mr. Bruce said nothing, supposing, perhaps, he might choose to make him deliver some message to him in private, which he would not have his people hear. But it was pure confusion and absence of mind, for he never spoke a word to him when he came. "You are a physician and a soldier," said the king. "Both, in time of need," replied Mr. Bruce. "But the sherriffe's letter tells me also, that you are a nobleman in the service of a great king that they call Englise-man, who is master of all the Indies, and who has Mahometan as well as Christian subjects, and allows them all to be governed by their own laws."—"Though I never said so to the sherriffe," replied Mr. Bruce, "yet it is true; I am as noble as any individual in my nation, and am also servant to the greatest king now reigning upon earth, of whose dominions, it is likewise truly said, these Indies are but a small part."—"How comes it," said the king, "you that are so noble and learned, that you know all things, all languages, and so brave that you fear no danger, but pass, with two or three old men, into such countries as this and Habesh, where Baady, my father, perished with an army? How comes it that you do not stay at home and enjoy yourself, eat, drink, take pleasure and rest, and not wander like a poor man, a prey to every danger?"—"You, Sir," replied Mr. Bruce, "may know some of this sort

sort of men ; certainly you do know them ; for there are in your religion, as well as mine, men of learning, and those too of great rank and nobility, who, on account of sins they have committed, or vows they have made, renounce the world, its riches, and pleasures. They lay down their nobility, and become humble and poor, so as often to be insulted by wicked and low men, not having the fear of God before their eyes.”—“ True, these are Dervish,” said some that were present. “ I am then one of these Dervish,” said Mr. Bruce, “ content with the bread that is given me, and bound for some years to travel in hardships and danger, doing all the good I can to poor and rich, serving every man, and hurting none.” “ Tybe ! that is well,” said the king. “ And how long have you been travelling about ?” adds one of the others. “ Near twenty years,” said Mr. Bruce. —“ You must be very young,” observed the king, “ to have committed so many sins, and so early ; they must all have been with women ?” —“ Part of them, I suppose were,” replied Mr. Bruce, “ but I did not say I was one of those that travelled on account of their sins, but that there were some Dervishes that did so on account of their vows, and some to learn wisdom.” The king then made a sign, and a slave brought a cushion, which Mr. Bruce would have refused, but he insisted that our traveller should sit down upon it.

The Cadi, or chief judge at Sennaar, who was one of the three that had joined in the conversation, now asked Mr. Bruce, if he knew when Hagiuge Magiuge was to come. Remembering what had been told him on this subject by a learned friend at Teawa, our traveller could scarcely forbear laughing, and replied that he had no wish to know any thing about him, but hoped those days were far off and would not happen in his time. “ What say your books concerning him ?” rejoined the Cadi, affecting a look of great wisdom. “ Do they agree with ours ?” —“ I

## The herb Bammia.

don't know," replied Mr. Bruce, "till I hear what is written in your books." "Hagiuge Magiuge," replied he, "little people, not so big as bees, are like the *zimb*, the fly of Sennaar, that come in great swarms out of the earth, aye, in multitudes that cannot be counted; two of their chiefs are to ride upon an ass, and every hair of that ass is to be a pipe, and every pipe is to play a different kind of music, and all that hear and follow them are carried to hell."—"I know them not," said Mr. Bruce, "and in the name of the Lord I fear them not, were they twice as small as you say they are, and twice as numerous. I trust in God I shall never be so fond of music as to go to hell after an ass, for all the tunes that he or they can play."—The king laughed heartily, and Mr. Bruce, being tired of the conversation, rose to go away.

The drum beat a little after six o'clock in the evening. Our traveller and his party then had a very comfortable dinner sent them, camel's flesh stewed with an herb of a viscous slimy substance, called Bammia. After having dined, and finished the journal of the day, Mr. Bruce fell to unpacking his instruments, the barometer and thermometer first; and, after having hung them up, was conversing with Adelan's servant when he should pay his visit to his master. About eight o'clock came a servant from the palace, telling Mr. Bruce that then was the time to bring his present to the king. He sorted the separate articles with all the speed he could, and went directly to the palace. The king was sitting in a large apartment, as far as he could guess, at some distance from the former. He was naked, but had several clothes lying upon his knee, and about him, and a servant was rubbing him over with very stinking butter or grease, with which his hair was dropping as if wet with water. Large as the room was, it could be smelled through the whole of it. The king asked Mr. Bruce if ever he greased himself as he did?



## Curious ointment for the head.

did? Mr. Bruce said, Very seldom, but fancied it would be very expensive. He then told him, that it was elephant's grease, which made people strong, and preserved the skin very smooth. Our traveller said he thought it very proper, but could not bear the smell of it, though his skin should turn as rough as an elephant's for the want of it. The king replied, that if Mr. Bruce had used it, his hair would not have turned so red as it was, and that it would all become white presently, when that redness came off. "You may see," continued he, "the Arabs driven in here by the Daveina, and all their cattle taken from them, because they have no longer any grease for their hair. The sun first turns it red, and then perfectly white; and you will know them in the street by their hair being the colour of yours. As for the smell, you will see that cured presently."

After having rubbed him abundantly with grease, the servants brought a pretty large horn, and in it something scented, about the consistence of honey. It was plain that civit was a great part of the composition. The king went out at the door, Mr. Bruce supposes into another room, and there two men deluged him over with pitchers of cold water. He then returned, and a slave anointed him with this sweet ointment; after which he sat down, as completely dressed, being just going to his woman's apartment where he was to sup. Mr. Bruce told him, he wondered why he did not use rose-water as in Abyssinia, Arabia, and Cairo. He said, he had it often from Cairo, when the merchants arrived; but as it was now long since any came, his people could not make more, for the rose would not grow in his country, though the women made something like it of lemon-flower.

His toilet being finished, our traveller then produced his present, which he told him the king of Abyssinia had sent to him, hoping that, according to the faith and custom of nations, he would not only

Aira.

protect him while here, but send him safely and speedily out of his dominions into Egypt. He answered, there was a time when he could have done all this, and more, but those times were changed. Sennaar was in ruin, and was not like what it was. He then ordered some perfumed sorbet to be brought for Mr. Bruce to drink in his presence, which is a pledge that your person is in safety. The king thereupon withdrew, and went to his ladies.

It was not till the eighth of May that Mr. Bruce had his audience of Shekh Adelan at Aira, which is three miles and a half from Sennaar; they walked out early in the morning, for the greatest part of the way along the side of the Nile, which had no beauty, being totally divested of trees, the bottom foul and muddy, and the edges of the water white with small concretions of calcareous earth, which, with the bright sun upon them, dazzled and affected their eyes very much. They then struck across a large sandy plain without trees or bushes, and came to Adelan's habitation.

Within the gate was a number of horses, with the soldiers' barracks behind them; they were all piqueted in ranks, their faces to their master's barracks. It was one of the finest sights Mr. Bruce ever saw of the kind. They were all above sixteen hands high, of the breed of the old Saracen horses, all finely made, and as strong as our coach horses, but exceedingly nimble in their motion; rather thick and short in the forehead, but with the most beautiful eyes, ears, and heads, in the world; they were mostly black, some of them black and white, some of them milk-white foaled, so not white by age, with white eyes and white hoofs, not perhaps a great recommendation.

A steel shirt of mail hung upon each man's quarters opposite to his horse, and by it an antelope's skin made soft like shamoy, with which it was covered from the dew of the night. A head-piece of cop-

## Aira.

per, without crest or plumage, was suspended by a lace above the shirt of mail, and was the most picturesque part of the trophy. To these was added an enormous broad-sword in a red leather scabbard ; and upon the pommel hung two thick gloves, not divided into fingers as ours, but like hedgers' gloves, their fingers in one poke. They told Mr. Bruce, that, within that inclosure at Aira, there were 400 horses, which, with the riders, and armour complete for each of them, were all the property of Shekh Adelan, every horseman being his slave and bought with his money.

Adelan was then sitting upon a piece of the trunk of a palm-tree, in the front of one of these divisions of his horses, which he seemed to be contemplating with pleasure ; a number of black people, his own servants and friends, were standing round him. He had on a long drap-coloured camlet gown, lined with yellow satin, and a camlet cap like a head-piece, with two short points that covered his ears. This, it seems, was his dress, when he rose early in the morning to visit his horses, which he never neglected. The Shekh was a man above six feet high, rather corpulent, had a heavy walk, seemingly more from affectation of grandeur than want of agility. He was about sixty ; of the colour and features of an Arab and not of a Negro, but had rather more beard than falls to the lot of people in this country ; large piercing eyes. and a determined, though, at the same time, a very pleasing countenance. Upon Mr. Bruce's coming near him, he got up : " You that are a horseman," says he, without any salutation, " what would your king of Habesh give for these horses ? " — " What king," answered Mr. Bruce in the same tone, " would not give any price for such horses, if he knew their value ? "

They then went into a large saloon, hung round with mirrors and scarlet damask ; in one of the longest

---

 Conversation of Adelan with Mr. Bruce.
 

---

longest sides were two large sofas covered with crimson and yellow damask, and large cushions of cloth of gold, like the king's. He now pulled off his camel-gown and cap, and remained in a crimson satin coat reaching down below his knees, which lapped over at the breast, and was girt round his waist with a scarf or sash, in which he had stuck a short dagger in an ivory sheath, mounted with gold; and had one of the largest and most beautiful amethysts upon his finger that Mr. Bruce ever saw, mounted plain, without any diamonds, and a small gold ear-ring in one of his ears. The following conversation then took place:

“Why have you come hither,” said he to Mr. Bruce, “without arms, and on foot, and without attendants?” *Yagoube*. “I was told that horses were not kept at Sennaar, and brought none with me.” *Adelan*. “You suppose you have come through great dangers, and so you have. But what do you think of me, who am day and night out in the fields, surrounded by hundreds and thousands of Arabs, all of whom would eat me alive if they dared?” *Yag*. “A brave man, used to command as you are, does not look to the number of his enemies, but to their abilities; a wolf does not fear ten thousand sheep more than he does one.” *Ad*. “True: look out at the door; these are their chiefs whom I am now taxing, and I have brought them hither that they may judge from what they see whether I am ready for them or not.” *Yag*. “You could not do more properly; but, as to my own affairs, I wait upon you from the king of Abyssinia, desiring safe conduct through your country into Egypt, with his royal promise, that he is ready to do the like for you again, or any other favour you may call upon him for.” He took the letter and read it. *Ad*. “The king of Abyssinia may be assured I am always ready to do more for him than this. It is true, since the mad attempt upon

---

Conversation of Adelan with Mr. Bruce.

---

upon Sennaar, and the next still madder, to replace old Baady upon the throne, we have had no formal peace, but neither are we at war. We understand one another as good neighbours ought to do; and what else is peace?" *Yag.* "You know I am a stranger and traveller, seeking my way home. I have nothing to do with peace or war between nations. All I beg is a safe conduct through your kingdom, and the rights of hospitality bestowed in such cases on every common stranger; and one of the favours I beg is, your acceptance of a small present. I bring it not from home; I have been long absent from thence, or it would have been better."

*Ad.* "I'll not refuse it, but it is quite unnecessary. I have faults like other men; but to hurt or plunder strangers, was never one of them. Mahomet Abou Kalec, my brother, is, however, a much better man to strangers than I am; you will be lucky if you meet him here; if not, I will do for you what I can, when once the confusion of these Arabs is over."

Mr. Bruce gave him the sheriffe's letter, which he opened, looked at, and laid by without reading, saying only, "Aye, Metical Aga is a good man; he sometimes takes care of our people going to Mecca; for my part, I never was there, and probably never shall." Mr. Bruce then presented his letter from Ali Bey to him. He placed it upon his knee, and gave a slap upon it with his open hand. "What," exclaimed he, "do you not know, have you not heard, that Mahomet Abou Dahab, his Hisnadar, has rebelled against him, banished him out of Cairo, and now sits in his place? But don't be disconcerted at that, I know you to be a man of honour and prudence: if Məhomet, my brother, does not come, as soon as I can get leisure, I will dispatch you." The servant that had conducted Mr. Bruce to Sennaar, and was then with him, went forward close to him, and said, in a kind of whisper, "Should he go often to the king?—" "When he pleases he may go to see the town, and take a walk,

---

Conclusion of the conversation.

---

walk, but never alone; and also to the palace, that, when he returns to his own country, he may report he saw a king at Sennaar, that neither knows how to govern, nor will suffer others to teach him; who knows not how to make war, and yet will not sit in peace." Mr. Bruce then took his leave of him, but there was a plentiful breakfast provided for our traveller in the other room. At going out, Mr. Bruce took his leave by kissing his hand, which he submitted to without reluctance. "Shekh," said our traveller, "when I pass these Arabs in the square, I hope it will not disoblige you if I converse with some of them out of curiosity?" "By no means," replied he, as "much as you please; but don't let them know where they can find you at Sennaar, or they will be in your house from morning till night, will eat up all your victuals, and then, in return, will cut your throat if they can meet you upon your journey." Mr. Bruce returned home to Sennaar. very well pleased with his reception at Aira. He had not seen, since he left Gondar, a man so open and frank in his manners, and who spoke without disguise what apparently he had in his heart.

The next morning, he was agreeably surprised by a visit from Hagi Belal, to whom he had been recommended by Metical Aga, and to whom Ibrahim Seraff, the English broker at Jidda, had addressed him for any money he should need at Sennaar. Belal welcomed him with great kindness, and repeated testimonies of joy and wonder at his safe arrival. He had been down in Athara at Gerri, or some villages near it, with merchandise, and had not yet seen the king since he came home, but gave Mr. Bruce the very worst description possible of the country, insomuch that there seemed to be not a spot, but the one he then stood on, in which he was not in imminent danger of destruction, from a variety of independent causes, which it seemed not possibly in his power to avoid. In the evening, he sent Mr.

Bruce

Hagi Belal.

Bruce some refreshments, which he had long been unaccustomed to; some tea, excellent coffee, some honey, and brown sugar, several bottles of rack, likewise nutmegs, cinnamon, ginger, and some very good dates of the dry kind which he had brought from Atbara.

Hagi Belal was a native of Morocco. He had been at Cairo, and also at Jidda and Mocha. He knew the English well, and professed himself both obliged and attached to them. It was some days before Mr. Bruce ventured to speak to him upon money business, or upon any probability of finding assistance at Sennaar. He gave him little hopes of the latter, repeating to him what he very well knew about the disagreement of the king and Adelan. He seemed to place all his expectations, and those were but faint ones, in the coming of Shekh Abou Kalec from Kordofan. He said, nothing could be expected from Shekh Adelan without going to Aira, as he would never trust himself in Sennaar, in this king's life time, but that the minister was absolute the moment he assembled his troops without the town.

One morning he came to Mr. Bruce after having been with the king, when our traveller was himself preparing to go to the palace. He said, he had been sent for upon his account, and had been questioned very narrowly what sort of a man he was. Having answered very favourably, both of him and his nation, he had asked for Metical Aga's letters, or any other letters received concerning him from Jidda; he said, that he had only shewn Metical's letter, written in the name of the Sheriffe, as also one from himself: that there were several great officers of government present; and the Cadi; whom Mr. Bruce had seen the first time he had been with the king, had read the letters aloud to them all: that one of them had asked, How it came that such a man as our traveller ventured to pass these deserts,

---

---

Hagi Belal.

---

---

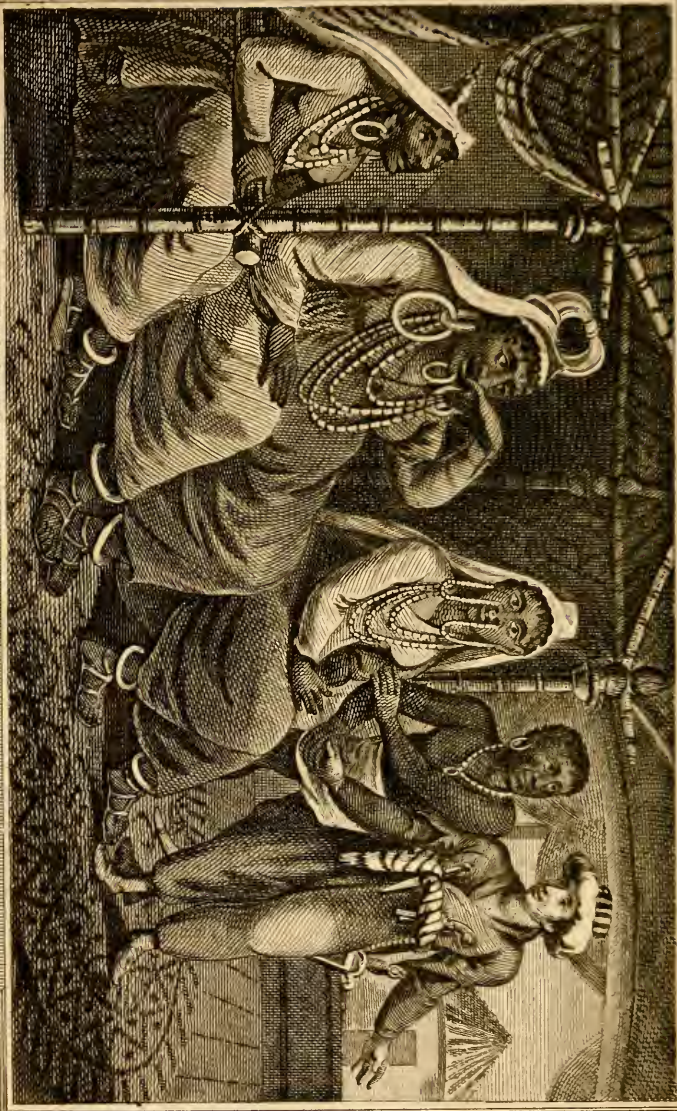
with four or five old servants, and what it was he came to see? that he answered, he apprehended his chief object at Sennaar was to be forwarded to his own country. It was also asked, Why Mr. Bruce had not some Englishmen with him, as none of his servants were of that nation, but poor beggarly Kopts, Arabs, and Turks, who were none of them of his religion. Belal answered, That travellers through these countries must take up with such people as they can find going the same way; however, he believed some English servants had died in Abyssinia, which country he had left the first opportunity that had offered, being wearied by the perpetual war which prevailed. Upon which the king said, "He has chosen well, when he came into this country for peace. You know, Hagi Belal, I can do nothing for him: there is nothing in my hands. I could more easily get him back into Abyssinia than forward him into Egypt. Who is it now that can pass into Egypt?" The Cadi then said, "Hagi Belal can get him to Suakem, and so to Jidda to his countrymen." To which Belal replied, "The king will find some way when he thinks farther of it."

A few days after this, Mr. Bruce had a message from the palace. He found the king sitting alone, apparently much chagrined, and in ill-humour. He asked him, in a very peevish manner, if he was not yet gone? To which he answered, "Your Majesty knows that it is impossible for me to go a step from Sennaar without assistance from you." He again asked him, in the same tone as before, "How could he think of coming that way?" He said, "Nobody imagined in Abyssinia but that he was able to give a stranger safe-conduct through his own dominions." He made no reply, but nodded a sign for Mr. Bruce to depart, which he immediately did, and so finished this short but disagreeable interview.

About four o'clock that same afternoon, Mr. Bruce was again sent for to the palace, when the king told him, that several of his wives were ill, and desired that



Engraving of the House with the Kings of Amara in the distance





---

---

The Queen of Sennaar.

---

---

that he would give them his advice, which he promised to do without difficulty, as all acquaintance with the fair-sex had hitherto been much to his advantage. He was admitted into a large square apartment very ill-lighted, in which were about fifty women, all perfectly black, without any covering but a very narrow piece of cotton rag about their waists. While he was musing whether or not all these might be queens, or whether there was any queen among them, one of them took him rudely by the hand, and led him rudely enough into another apartment. This was much better lighted than the first. Upon a large bench, or sofa, covered with blue Surat cloth, sat three persons clothed from the neck to the feet with blue cotton shirts.

One of these, who, as Mr. Bruce found to be the favourite, was about six feet high, and corpulent beyond all proportion. She seemed to him, next to the elephant and rhinoceros, to be the largest living creature he had ever met with. Her features were perfectly like those of a Negro; a ring of gold passed through her under lip, and weighed it down, till, like a flap, it covered her chin, and left her teeth bare, which were very small and fine. The inside of her lip she had made black with antimony. Her ears reached down to her shoulders, and had the appearance of wings; she had in each of them a large ring of gold, somewhat smaller than a man's little finger, and about five inches in diameter. The weight of these had drawn down the hole where her ear was pierced so much that three fingers might easily pass above the ring. She had a gold necklace of several rows, one below another, to which were hung rows of sequins pierced. She had on her ankles two manacles of gold, larger than any our traveller had ever seen upon the feet of felons, with which he could not conceive it was possible for her to walk; but afterwards he found they were hollow. The others were dressed pretty much in the same manner; only there was one who had

## The three queens blooded.

chains which came from her ears to the outside of each nostril, where they were fastened. There was also a ring put through the gristle of her nose, and which hung down to the opening of her mouth. It had altogether something of the appearance of a horse's bridle. Upon his coming near them, the eldest put her hand to her mouth and kissed it, saying at the same time, in very vulgar Arabic, "Kif-halek howaja?" How do you do, merchant. Mr. Bruce never in his life was more pleased with distant salutations than at this time. He answered, "Peace be among you! I am a physician and not a merchant." There was not one part of their whole bodies, inside and outside, in which some of them had not ailments. The three queens insisted upon being blooded, which desire Mr. Bruce complied with, as it was an operation that required short attendance; but, upon producing the lancets, their hearts failed them. They then all cried out for the Tabange, which, in Arabic, means a pistol; but what they meant by this word was the cupping-instrument, which goes off with a spring like the snap of a pistol. He had two of these, but not then in his pocket. He sent his servant home, however, to bring one, and, that same evening, performed the operations upon the three queens with great success. The room was overflowed with an effusion of royal blood, and the whole ended with their insisting upon his giving them the instrument itself, which he was obliged to do, after cupping two of their slaves before them, who had no complaints, merely to shew them how the operation was to be performed.

Another night Mr. Bruce was obliged to attend them, and gave vomits to the queens, and two or three of the great ladies. The room in which this operation took place was prodigiously hot, and the horrid black figures, moaning and groaning with sickness all around, gave him some slight idea of the punishment of the world below. He observed that, on coming into their presence, the queens were covered

---

---

Mahomet.

vered with cotton shirts, but no sooner did their complaints become the topic of conversation than, to the utmost surprise of our traveller, each of them in turn stripped herself entirely naked, laying her cotton shirt loosely on her lap as she sat cross-legged like a tailor; and he could not help observing that their breasts reached down to their knees.

One evening when Mr. Bruce was going to wait upon the king, being already within the palace, and passing through a number of rooms then totally deserted, he was met by Mahomet, the king's servant, who had accompanied him from Teawa to Sennaar, and who, counterfeiting drunkenness, now came up to him with a drawn sword, demanding a recompence for his trouble. Mr. Bruce threw him to the ground, disarmed him, and, with the assistance of his black servant Soliman, who came up at the instant, carried him before the king, who, on hearing the complaint, coldly replied, "That the man was drunk, and that the people of that country were not accustomed to see Franks, like our traveller, walking in the streets." He even reprov'd Soliman for his presumption in disarming one of his servants in his palace, and ordered Mahomet's sword to be returned to him. On his return home, Mr. Bruce who was astonished at this behaviour of the king, met Kittou, Adelan's brother, who was left with the care of the town. To him he related the whole affair. Kittou declared that it was the king's fault, and advised Mr. Bruce to keep as much at home as possible, and never to go out unattended, especially at night; intimating also, that while he remained in Adelan's house, nobody durst molest him there. Mr. Bruce therefore resolved to keep close at home, and to put into some form the observations which he had made upon the extraordinary government of Sennaar.

This country, which had previously been occupied by Arabs, incorporated with the old indigenious inhabitants, was invaded, and conquered in the beginning of the 16th century, by a black nation before settled

settled on the western bank of the Bahar el Abiad. This race of negroes, called in their own country Shillook, founded this monarchy, and built Sennaar under Anru son of Adelan, the first of their sovereigns on the eastern side of the Nile. From that period, till the time when Mr. Bruce visited Sennaar, twenty kings had reigned, including Ismain, the sovereign then on the throne. Eight of these had been deposed, and Ismain stood the fairest chance possible of being the ninth. It is one of the singularities of this brutal people, that the king ascends his throne under an admission that he may be lawfully put to death by his own subjects or slaves, if the great officers in council assembled decree that it is not for the advantage of the state that he should be suffered to reign any longer. There is one officer of his own family who alone can be the instrument of shedding the blood of his sovereign and kinsman. This officer, called Sid el Coom, or master of the king's household, has no vote in deposing him, nor is any guilt imputed to him, how many soever of his sovereigns he thus regularly murders. Achmet Sid el Coom, the then licensed regicide and resident in Ismain's palace, had murdered the late King Nasser, and two of his sons who were well grown, besides a child at the breasts; and he was daily expecting to confer the same favor on the reigning monarch. This man, who was very much Mr. Bruce's friend on account of the relief which he had experienced from his prescriptions for the gravel, furnished him with a list of the kings, how long they reigned, and whether they died a natural death, or were deposed and murdered.

Upon the death of a King of Sennaar, his eldest son succeeds by right; and immediately afterwards as many of the brothers of the reigning prince as can be apprehended are put to death by the Sid el Coom. This practice of murdering all the collaterals of the royal family seems to be but a part of the

the

the same idea which prevails in Abyssinia, of confining the princes all their lives upon a mountain. As in Abyssinia, so neither in Sennaar, do women succeed to sovereignty. The royal family were originally Negroes, and remain so still, when their mothers have been black like themselves; but when the king has happened to marry an Arab woman, as he often does, the black colour of the father cedes to the white of the mother, and the child is white.

There is a constant mortality among the children in and about this metropolis, insomuch that, in all appearance, the people would be extinct were they not supplied by a number of slaves brought from all the different countries to the southward. The men, however, are strong and remarkable for size, but short lived, owing, probably, to their indulging themselves in every sort of excess from their very infancy.

Once in his reign the king is obliged, with his own hand, to plow and sow a piece of land. From this operation he is called Baady, the countryman or peasant: it is a name common to the whole race of kings, though they have generally another name peculiar to each person, and this not attended to has occasioned confusion in the narrative given by strangers writing concerning them.

No horse, mule, ass, or any beast of burden, will breed, or live at Sennaar, or many miles about it. Poultry does not live there. Neither dog nor cat, sheep nor bullock, can be preserved a season there. They must go all, every half year, to the sands. Though all possible care be taken of them, they die in every place where the fat earth is about the town during the first season of the rains.

Two greyhounds which Mr. Bruce brought from Atbara, and the mules which he brought from Abyssinia, lived only a few weeks after he arrived. They seemed to have some inward complaint, for nothing appeared outwardly. Several kings have tried to  
keep

keep lions, but no care could prolong their lives beyond the first rains. Shekh Adelan had two, which were in great health, being kept with his horses at grass in the sands but three miles from Sennaar: neither rose, nor any species of jessamine grow here: no tree but the lemon flowers near the city, that ever Mr. Bruce saw; the rose has been often tried, but in vain.

The town of Sennaar is very populous, there being in it many good houses after the fashion of the country. They have parapet roofs, which is a singular construction; for in other places, within the rains, the roofs are all conical. The houses are all built of clay, with very little straw mixed with it.

Nothing is more pleasant than the country around Sennaar, in the end of August and beginning of September; instead of that barren bare waste, which it appeared on Mr. Bruce's arrival in May, the corn now sprung up, and covering the ground, made the whole of this immense plain appear a level, green land, interspersed with great lakes of water, and ornamented at certain intervals with groups of villages, the conical tops of the houses presenting, at a great distance, the appearance of small encampments. Through this immense extensive plain winds the Nile, a delightful river there, above a mile broad, full to the very brim, but never overflowing. Every where on these banks are seen numerous herds of the most beautiful cattle of various kinds, the tribute recently extorted from the Arabs, who, freed from all their vexations, return home with the remainder of their flocks in peace, at as great a distance from the town, country, and their oppressors, as they possibly can.

War and treason seem to be the only employment of this horrid people, whom Heaven has separated, by almost impassable deserts, from the rest of mankind, confining them to an accursed spot, seemingly



to give them earnest in time of the only other worse state of being which it has reserved to them for an eternal hereafter.

The dress of the natives of Sennaar is very simple. It consists of a long shirt of blue cloth called Marowty, which covers them from the lower part of the neck down to their feet, but does not conceal the neck itself; and this is the only difference between the men's and women's dress; that of the women covers their neck altogether, being buttoned like ours. The men have sometimes a sash tied about the middle; and both men and women go bare-footed in the house, even those of the better sort of people. Their floors are covered with Persian carpets, especially the women's apartments. In fair weather they wear sandals; and without doors they use a kind of wooden patten, very neatly ornamented with shells. In the greatest heat at noon, they order buckets of water to be thrown upon them instead of bathing. Both men and women anoint themselves, at least once a day, with camels' grease mixed with civet, which they imagine softens their skin, and preserves them from cutaneous eruptions, of which they are so fearful, that the smallest pimple in any visible part of their body keeps them in the house till it disappears. For the same reason, though they have a clean shirt every day, they use one dipt in grease to lie in all night, as they have no covering but this, and lie upon a bull's hide, tanned, and very much softened by this constant greasing, and at the same time very cool, though it occasions a smell that no washing can free them from.

The principal diet of the poorer sort is millet, made into bread or flour. The rich make a pudding of this, toasting the flour before the fire, and pouring milk and butter into it; besides which they eat beef, partly roasted and partly raw. Their horned cattle are the largest and fattest in the world, and are exceedingly fine; but the common meat sold in the

market is camel's flesh. The liver of the animal, and the spare-rib, are always eaten raw through the whole country. Hog's flesh is not sold in the market; but all the people of Sennaar eat it publicly: men in office, who pretend to be Mahometans, eat theirs in secret.

There are three principal governments in the kingdom of Sennaar. The first is at El-aice, the capital of that country from which the Shillook come. The Bahar el Abiad spreads itself all over the territory, and, divided into a quantity of small channels, surrounds a number of little islands, upon each of which is a village; and this collection of villages is called the town of El-aice. The inhabitants are all fishermen, and have a number of boats, like canoes, in which they sail up and down to the cataracts. The second government, next to this in importance, is Kordofan. The revenue consists chiefly in slaves procured from Dyre and Tegla. This situation it seems is the most convenient for invading those mountains, either from its having water in the way, or from some other cause that is not known. It is a frontier nearest to Dar-Fowr, a black state still more barbarous, if possible, than Sennaar, and by which it has often been taken from Sennaar, and again retaken. The third government is Fazuelo, bounded by the river El-aice on the west, and the Nile on the east, and the mountains of Fazuelo, where are the great cataracts, on the south. These are part of the large mountains of Dyre and Tegla, which reach so far westward into the continent, from whence comes the chief supply both of gold and slaves which constitute the riches of this country; for the greatest part of the revenue of Fazuelo is gold: and the person who commands it is the same native prince from whom the army of Sennaar conquered it.

The forces at Sennaar, immediately around the capital, consist of about 14,000 Nubia, who fight naked, having no other armour than a short javelin and a round

## The Shekh Fidele of Teawa.

round shield, very bad troops, as our author supposes, about 1800 horse, all black, mounted by black slaves, armed with coats of mail, and without any other weapon than a broad Slavonian sword. The Shekh has not a musquet in his whole army. Besides these horse, there is a great, but uncertain number of Arabs, who pay their tribute immediately to the Shekh and to the great men in government, and live under their protection close by the town, and thereby have the advantage of trading with it, of supplying it with provisions, and, no doubt, must contribute in part to its strength and defence in time of need.

On the 7th of August, Mr. Bruce was informed by Hagi Belal, that Shekh Fidele of Teawa had been several days in the palace with the king, and had informed him, that Mr. Bruce was laden with money, besides a quantity of cloth of gold, the richest he had ever seen, which the King of Abyssinia had destined as a present to him, but which our traveller had perverted to his own use: he added that the king had expressed himself in a very threatening manner, and that he was very much afraid he was not in safety if Shekh Adelan was gone from Aira. Upon this Mr. Bruce desired Hagi Belal to go to the palace, and obtain for him an audience of the king. In vain he represented to our traveller the risk he ran by this measure; he persisted in his resolution; he was tied to the stake. To fly was impossible; and he had often overcome such dangers by braving them.

Belal went then unwillingly to the palace. Whether he delivered the message or not, he soon returned, saying the king was busy, and could not be seen. Mr. Bruce had, in the interim, sent Soliman to the Gindi or Sed el Coom, telling him his difficulties, and the news he had heard. In place of returning an answer, he came directly to him himself, and was sitting with him when Hagi Belal returned, who appeared somewhat disconcerted at the meeting. Gin-

## Black eunuchs at Mecca.

di reproved Hagi Belal very sharply, asking him what good all that tittle-tattle did either him or Mr. Bruce, and insinuated pretty plainly, that he believed Hagi Belal did this in concert with the king, to extort some present from our traveller. After some further conversation Gindi took his leave, and Mr. Bruce attended him down stairs, with many professions of gratitude; and, at the door, he said in a very low voice, to our traveller, "Take care of you Belal; he is a dog worse than a Christian."

It was now the 20th; and, for several days since Adelan's departure, no provisions were sent to Mr. Bruce's house, as before was usual. Money therefore became absolutely necessary, not only for his daily subsistence, but for camels to carry his baggage, provisions, and water, across the desert. He now despaired absolutely of assistance of any kind from the king; and an accident that happened made him lay all thoughts aside of ever troubling him more upon the subject. There are at Mecca a number of black eunuchs, whose services are dedicated to that temple, and the sepulchre of Medina. Part of these, from time to time, procure liberty to return on a visit to their respective homes, or to the large cities where they were sold from, on the Niger, Bornou, Tocrur, and Tombucto, where they beg donations for the holy places, and frequently collect large sums of gold, which abounds in these towns and territories. One of these, called Mahomet Towash, which signifies Eunuch, had returned from a begging voyage in Sudan, or Nigritia, and was at Sennaar exceedingly ill with an intermitting fever. The king had sent for Mr. Bruce to visit him, and the bark, in a few days, had perfectly recovered him. A proportional degree of gratitude had, in return, taken place in the breast of Mahomet, who, going to Cairo, was exceedingly desirous of taking Mr. Bruce with him; and this desire was increased, when he heard he had letters from the Sheriffe of Mecca, and was acquainted

---

---

Intended departure for Atbara.

---

---

ed with Metical Aga, who was his immediate master. Nothing could be more fortunate than this encounter at such a time; for he had spare camels in great plenty: and the Arabs, as he passed them, continued giving him more, and supported him with provisions wherever he went; for these people being accounted sacred, and regarded with a certain religious awe, as being in the immediate service of their prophet, till now used to pass inviolate wherever they were going, however unsettled the times, or however slenderly attended.

Every thing was now ready, Mr. Bruce's instruments and baggage packed up, and the 25th of August fixed when they should begin their journey to Atbara. Mahomet, who passed a great part of his time at Mr. Bruce's house, had not been seen for several days, which they did not think extraordinary, being busy themselves, and knowing that his trade demanded continual attendance on the great people; but they were exceedingly surprised at hearing from black Soliman, that he and all his equipage had set out the night of the 20th for Atbara. This they found afterwards was at the earnest persuasion of the king, and was at that time a heavy disappointment to Mr. Bruce, however fortunate it turned out afterwards.

The night of the 25th, which was to have been that of their departure, Mr. Bruce sat late in his room up stairs, in the back, or most private part of the house. His little company was holding with him a most melancholy council on what had so recently happened, and in general, upon the unpromising face of their affairs. Their single lamp was burning very low, and suggested to them that it was the hour of sleep; to which, however, none of them were very much inclined. Georgis, a Greek, who, on account of the soreness of his eyes, had staid below in the dark, and had fallen asleep, came running up stairs in a great fright, and told them he

had been awakened by the noise of men endeavoring to force open the door: that he hearkened a little, and found there were many of them. The arms of the little party were all ready; and they snatched them up and ran towards the door; but Mr. Bruce stopped, and planted them upon the first landing-place in the stair-case, as he wished not to fire till the enemy was fairly within the house, that no excuse might remain for this violation of hospitality. By this time, the assailants had forced the outer gate, and were then in the lodge, endeavouring to do the same by the inner, having put a hankspike under it to lift it up from the hinges. "Are you not madmen," said Mr. Bruce, "and weary of your lives, to attempt to force Adelan's house, when there are within it men abundantly provided with large fire-arms, that, upon one discharge through the door, will lay you all dead where you now stand?" "Stand by from the door," cried Ismael, "and let me fire. These black Kafirs don't yet know what my blunderbuss is." They had been silent from the time Mr. Bruce had spoken, and had withdrawn the handspike from under the door. "Ullah! Ullah!" said one of them softly, "how sound you sleep! we have been endeavouring to awaken you this hour. The king is ill: tell Yagoube to come to the palace, and open the door instantly." "Tell the king," replied Mr. Bruce, "to drink water, and I will see him in the morning." At this time one of Mr. Bruce's servants fired a pistol in the air, out of an upper window; upon which they all ran off. They seemed to be about ten or twelve in number, and left three handspikes behind them. The noise of the pistol brought the guard, or patrole, in about half an hour, who carried intelligence to the Sid el Coom, our traveller's friend, by whom he was informed in the morning, that he had found out all the culprits, and put them in irons: that Mahomet, the king's servant, who met them at Teawa, was one; and that there

was no possibility now of concealing this from Adelan, who would order him to be impaled.

Things were now come to such a crisis, that Mr. Bruce was determined to leave his instruments and papers with Kittou, Adelan's brother, or with the Sid el Coom, while he went to Shaddly to see Adelan. But first he thought it necessary to apply to Hagi Belal to try what funds they could raise to provide necessaries for their journey. Mr. Bruce shewed him the letter of Ibrahim, the English broker of Jidda, of which before he had received a copy and repeated advices, and told him he should want 200 sequins at least, for his camels and provisions, as well as for some presents that he should have occasion for, to make his way to the great men in Atbara. Never was surprise better counterfeited than by this man. He held up his hands in the utmost astonishment, repeating, 200 sequins! twenty times over, and asked Mr. Bruce if he thought money grew upon trees at Sennaar: that it was with the utmost difficulty he could spare him twenty dollars, part of which he must borrow from a friend.

This was a stroke that seemed to insure Mr. Bruce's destruction, no other resource being now left. He was already indebted to Hagi Belal twenty dollars for provision: he had seven mouths to feed daily; and as he had neither meat, money, nor credit, to continue at Sennaar was impossible. He had seen, a few nights before, that no house could protect him there; and to leave Sennaar was, in his situation, as impossible as to stay there. He had neither camels to carry provisions and baggage, nor skins for water; nor, indeed, any provisions to carry, nor money to supply himself with any of these, nor knew any person that could give him assistance nearer than Cairo, from which they were then distant about 17° of the meridian, or above 1000 miles in a straight line; great part of which was through the most barren, inhospitable deserts in the world, destitute of all vegeta-

vegetation, and of every animal that had the breath of life. Hagi Belal was inflexible: he began now to be weary of our travellers, to see them but seldom; and there was great appearance of his soon withdrawing himself entirely.

Mr. Bruce's servants began to murmur: some of them had known of his gold chain from the beginning, and these, in the common danger, imparted what they knew to the rest. In short, he resolved, though very unwillingly, not to sacrifice his own life and that of his servants, and the completion of his travel, now so far advanced, to childish vanity. He determined therefore to abandon his gold chain, the honourable recompence of a day full of fatigue and danger. To whom to intrust, it was the next consideration; and, upon mature deliberation, he found it could be to nobody but Hagi Belal, bad as he had reason to think he was. However, to put a check upon him, he sent for the Sid el Coom, in whose presence he repeated his accusation against Belal; he read the Seraff's letter in his favour, and the several letters that Belal had written him whilst he was at Gondar, declaring his acceptance of the order to furnish him with money when he should arrive at Sennaar; and he upbraided him in the strongest terms with duplicity and breach of faith. But all that he could say was very short of the violent expostulation from the Gindi that immediately followed. He gave Hagi Belal many not obscure hints, that he looked upon this injury as done to himself, and would repay him: that though he had done this to please the king, the time might not be far off when that favour would be of very little use to him; on the contrary, might be a reason for stripping him of all he had in the world." The force of these arguments seemed to strike Hagi Belal's imagination very powerfully. He even offered to advance 50 sequins, and to see if he could raise any more among his friends. The Gindi, a rare instance in that country, offered to lend



---

The king of Nubia's discourse with Mr. Bruce.

---

lend him fifty. But the dye was now cast, the chain had been produced and seen, and it was become exceedingly dangerous for Mr. Bruce to carry such a quantity of gold in any shape along with him. He therefore consented to sell it to Hagi Belal in presence of the Gindi, and they immediately set about the purchase of necessaries; with this proviso, that if Adelan, upon Mr. Bruce's going to Shaddly, did furnish him with camels and necessaries, so much of the chain should be returned.

It was the 5th of September, that they were all prepared to leave the capital of Nubia, an inhospitable country from the beginning, and which, every day they continued in it, had engaged them in greater difficulties and danger. They flattered themselves, that, once disengaged from this bad step, the greatest part of their sufferings was over; for they apprehended nothing but from men, and, with very great reason, thought they had seen the worst of them.

In the evening Mr. Bruce received a message from the king to come directly to the palace. He accordingly obeyed, taking two servants along with him, and found him sitting in a little low chamber, very neatly fitted up with chintz, or printed calico curtains, of a very gay and glaring pattern. He was smoking with a very long Persian pipe through water, was alone, and seemed rather grave than in ill humour. He gave Mr. Bruce his hand to kiss as usual; and, after pausing a moment without speaking, during which our traveller was standing before him, a slave brought him a little stool, and set it down just opposite to him; upon which he said, in a low voice, so that Mr. Bruce could scarcely hear him, "Fudda, sit down," pointing to the stool. He sat down accordingly. "You are going, I hear," said he, "to Adelan." Our traveller answered, "Yes." "Did he send for you?" Mr. Bruce, said, "No; but, as he wanted to return to Egypt, he expected letters from him in answer to those he brought from Cairo."

Sequel of the conversation.

“ You are not so gay,” observed the king, “ as when you first arrived here.” “ I have had no very great reason,” said Mr. Bruce. Their conversation was now taking a very laconic and serious turn, but he did not seem to understand the meaning of what our traveller said last. “ Adelan,” he again began, “ has sent for you by my desire ; Wed Abroff and all the Jehaina Arabs have rebelled, and will pay no tribute. They say you have a quantity of powerful fire-arms with you, that will kill twenty or thirty men at a shot.” “ Say fifty or sixty, if it hits them.” “ He is therefore to employ you with your guns to punish those Arabs, and spoil them of their camels, part of which he will give to you.” Mr. Bruce presently understood what he meant, and only answered, “ I am a stranger here, and desire to hurt no man. My arms are for my own defence against robbery and violence.” At this instant the Turk, Hagi Ismael, cried from without the door, in broken Arabic, “ Why did you not tell those black Kafirs, you sent to rob and murder us the other night, to stay a little longer, and you would have been better able to judge what our fire-arms can do, without sending for us either to Abroff or Adelan. By the head of the prophet ! let them come in the day time, and I will fight ten of the best you have in Sennaar.” “ The man is mad,” said the king, “ but he brings me to speak of what was in my head when I desired to see you. Adelan has been informed that Mahomet, my servant, who brought you from Teawa, has been guilty of a drunken frolic at the door of his house, and has sent soldiers to take him to-day with two or three others of his companions.” “ I know nothing about Mahomet ;” replied our traveller, “ nor do I drink with him, or give him drink. About half a score of people broke into Adelan’s house in the night, with a view to rob and murder us, but I was not at the pains to fire at such wretches as these. Two or three servants with sticks were all that were needful. I understand

## Departure from Sennaar.

derstand, indeed, that Shekh Adelan is exceedingly displeased that I did not fire at them, and has sent to the Gindi, ordering him to deliver two of them to him to-morrow to be executed publicly before the door of his house on the market-day. But this, you know, is among yourselves. I am very well pleased none of them are dead, as they might have been, by my hands or those of my people." "True;" replied the king, "but Adelan is not king, and I charge you, when you see him, to ask for Mahomet's life, or a considerable deal of blame will fall upon you. When you return back, I will send him to conduct you to the frontiers of Egypt." Upon this Mr. Bruce bowed and took his leave. He went home perfectly determined what he was to do. He had now obtained from the king an involuntary safeguard till he should arrive at Adelan's; that is, he was sure that, in hopes Mr. Bruce might procure a reprieve for Mahomet, no trap would be laid for him on the road. He determined, therefore, to make the best use of his time; every thing being ready, the camels loaded, and sent forward that night to a small village called Soliman, three or four miles from Sennaar. Having settled his accounts with Hagi Belal, he received back six links, the miserable remains of one hundred and eighty-four, of which this noble chain once consisted. This traitor kept him the few last minutes to write a letter to the English at Jidda, to recommend him for the service he had done Mr. Bruce at Sennaar; and this he complied with, that he might inform the broker Ibrahim that he had received no money from his correspondent, and give him a caution never again to trust Hagi Belal in similar circumstances.

After leaving Sennaar, Mr. Bruce was overtaken on the road by a black slave, who at first gave him some apprehension, as he was alone with only one Barbarian, a Nubian servant, by the side of his camel, and was going slowly. Upon enquiry, he found him

Soliman—Chundi.

to be sent by Hagi Belal, with a basket containing some green tea and sugar, and four bottles of rack, in return for his letter. He sent back the messenger, and gave the care of the basket to his own servant, and, about ten o'clock in the evening of the 5th of September, they all met together joyfully at Soliman. Here Mr. Bruce communicated to his attendants his resolution to proceed at once for Atbara, rather than suffer himself to be again entangled between Adelan and the king.

Accordingly on the 8th of September, they left the village of Soliman; and on the 4th of October, after meeting with various adventures in the course of their journey, but none of any material consequence, they arrived at Chendi, or Chundi, which is a large village, the capital of its district, the government of which belongs to Sittina, (as she is called), which signifies the Mistress, or the Lady, she being sister to Wed Ageeb, the principal of the Arabs in this country. She had been married, but her husband was dead. She had one son, Idris Wed el Faal, who was to succeed to the government of Chendi upon his mother's death, and who, in effect, governed all affairs of his kindred already.

On the 12th of October, Mr. Bruce waited upon Sittina, who received him behind a screen, so that it was impossible either to see her figure or her face; he observed, however, that there were apertures so managed in the screen that she had a perfect view of him. She expressed herself with great politeness; talked much upon the terms in which Adelan was with the king, and wondered exceedingly how a white man like him should venture so far in such an ill-governed country. "Allow me, Madam," said Mr. Bruce, "to complain of a breach of hospitality in you, which no Arab has been yet guilty of towards me." "Me!" said she, "that would be strange indeed, to a man that bears my brother's letter. How can that be?" "Why, you tell me, Madam, that I

am a white man, by which I know that you see me, without giving me the like advantage. The queens of Sennaar did not use me so hardly; I had a full sight of them without having used any importunity." On this she broke out into a great fit of laughter; then fell into a conversation about medicines to make her hair grow, or rather to hinder it from falling off. She desired Mr. Bruce to come to her the next day: that her son Idris would be then at home from the Howat; and that he very much wished to see him. She that day sent him plenty of provisions from her own table.

On the 13th, it was so excessively hot that it was impossible to suffer the burning sun. The poisonous simoom blew likewise as if it came from an oven. The eyes of our traveller and his attendants were dim, their lips cracked, their knees tottering, their throats perfectly dry, and no relief was found from drinking an immoderate quantity of water. The people advised Mr. Bruce to dip a sponge in vinegar and water, and hold it before his mouth and nose; this greatly relieved him. In the evening he went to Sittina. Upon entering the house, a black slave laid hold of him by the hand, and placed him in a passage, at the end of which were two opposite doors. Mr. Bruce did not well know the reason of this; but staid only a few minutes, when he heard one of the doors at the end of the passage open, and Sittina appeared magnificently dressed, with a kind of round cap of solid gold upon the crown of her head, all beaten very thin, and hung round with sequins; with a variety of gold chains, solitaires, and necklaces of the same metal, about her neck. Her hair was plaited in ten or twelve small divisions like tails, which hung down below her waist; and over her was thrown a common cotton white garment. She had a purple silk stole, or scarf, hung very gracefully upon her back, brought again round her waist, without covering her shoulders or arms. Upon her wrists she had

had two bracelets like handcuffs, about half an inch thick, and two gold manacles of the same at her feet, full an inch in diameter, the most disagreeable and awkward part of her dress. Mr. Bruce expected she would have hurried through with some affectation of surprise. On the contrary, she stopt in the middle of the passage, saying, in a very grave manner, "Kif-halec,—how are you?" Mr. Bruce thought this was an opportunity of kissing her hand, which he did, without her shewing any sort of reluctance. "Allow me as a physician, Madam," said Mr. Bruce, "to say one word." She bowed with her head, and said, "Go in at that door, and I will hear you." The slave appeared, and carried him through a door at the bottom of the passage into a room, while her mistress vanished in at another door at the top, and there was the screen he had seen the day before, and the lady behind it.

She was a woman scarcely forty, taller than the middle size, had a very round plump face, her mouth rather large, very red lips, the finest teeth and eyes he had seen; but at the top of her nose, and between her eye-brows, she had a small speck made of antimony, four-cornered, and of the size of the smallest patches our women used to wear; another rather longer upon the top of her nose, and one on the middle of her chin.

*Sittina.* "Tell me what you would say to me as a physician." *Ya.* "It was, Madam, but in consequence of your discourse yesterday. That heavy gold cap with which you press your hair will certainly be the cause of a great part of it falling off." *Sitt.* "I believe so; but I should catch cold, I am so accustomed to it, if I was to leave it off. Are you a man of name and family in your own country?" *Ya.* "Of both, Madam." *Sitt.* "Are the women handsome there?" *Ya.* "The handsomest in the world, Madam; but they are so good, and so excellent in all other respects, that nobody thinks at all of their beauty, nor do they value

value themselves upon it." *Sitt.* "And do they allow you to kiss their hands?" *Ya.* "I understand you, Madam, though you have mistaken me. There is no familiarity in kissing hands; it is a mark of homage, and distant respect paid in my country to our sovereigns, and to none earthly besides." *Sitt.* "O yes! but the king's." *Ya.* "Yes, and the queens too always on the knee, Madam: I said our sovereigns, meaning both king and queen. On her part, it is a mark of gracious condescension, in favour of rank, merit, and honourable behaviour; it is a reward for dangerous and difficult services, above all other compensation." *Sitt.* "But do you know that no man ever kissed my hand but you?" *Ya.* "It is impossible I should know that; nor is it material. Of this I am confident, it was meant respectfully, cannot hurt you, and ought not to offend you." *Sitt.* "It certainly has done neither: but I wish very much Idris my son would come and see you, as it is on his account I dressed myself to-day." *Ya.* "I hope, Madam, when I do see him he will think of some way of forwarding me safely to Barbar, in my way to Egypt." *Sitt.* "Safely! God forgive you! you are throwing yourself away wantonly. Idris himself, king of this country, dares not undertake such a journey. But why did not you go along with Mahomet Towash? He set out only a few days ago for Cairo, the same way you are going, and has, I believe, taken all the Hybeers with him. Go call the porter," said she to her slave. When the porter came, "Do you know if Mahomet Towash is gone to Egypt?" "I know he is gone to Barbar," said the porter; "the two Mahomets, and Abdel Jeleel, the Bishareen, are with him." "Why did he take all the Hybeers?" said *Sittina.* "The men were tired and discouraged," answered the porter, "by their late ill-usage from the Cubhacesh, and being stripped of every thing, they wanted to be at home." *Sitt.* "Somebody else will offer, but you must not go without a good man

## Preparation to leave Chundi.

man with you ; I will not suffer you. These Bisha-reen are people known here, and may be trusted : but while you stay let me see you every day, and if you want any thing, send by a servant of mine. It is a tax, I know, improperly laid upon a man like you, to ask for every necessary ; but Idris will be here, and he will provide for you better." He went away upon this conversation, and soon found that Mahomet Towash had so well followed the direction of the king of Sennaar, as to take all the Hybeers, or guides of note, with him on purpose to disappoint Mr. Bruce.

One day, while our traveller was sitting in his tent musing upon the very unpromising aspect of his affairs, an Arab of very ordinary appearance, naked, with only a cotton cloth around his middle, came up to him, and offered to conduct him to Barbar, and thence to Egypt. He said his house was at Daroo on the side of the Nile, about twenty miles beyond Syene, or Assouan, nearer Cairo. Mr. Bruce asked him why he had not gone with Mahomet Towash? He said, he did not like the company, and was very much mistaken if their journey ended well. Upon pressing him further if this was really the only reason ; he confessed that he had been sick for some months at Chendi, contracted debt, and had been obliged to pawn his clothes, and that his camel was detained for what still remained unpaid. After much conversation, repeated several days, Mr. Bruce found that Idris (for that was his name) was a man of some substance in his own country, and had a daughter married to the Schourbatchie at Assouan. He said that this was his last journey, for he would never cross the desert again. A bargain was now soon made. Mr. Bruce redeemed his camel and cloak ; he engaged to shew him the way to Egypt, and he was there to be recompensed, according to his behaviour.

Our traveller now prepared to leave Chendi, but first returned his benefactress Sittina thanks for all her



## Gooz.

her favors. She had called for Idris, and given him very positive instructions, mixed with threats, if he misbehaved; and hearing what Mr. Bruce had done for him, she too gave him an ounce of gold. Our traveller begged he might be again allowed to testify his gratitude by kissing her hand, which she condescended to in the most gracious manner, laughing all the time, and saying, "Well, you are an odd man! if Idris my son saw me just now, he would think me mad."

On the 20th of October, in the evening, they left Chendi, and rested two miles from the town, and about a mile from the river; and next day, the 21st, at three quarters past four in the morning they continued their journey, and passed through five or six villages of the Jahaleen on their left. At this place begins a large island in the Nile several miles long, full of villages, trees, and corn; it is called Kurgos. Opposite to this is the mountain Gibbainy, where is the first scene of ruins Mr. Bruce had met with since that of Axum in Abyssinia. They saw here heaps of broken pedestals, like those of Axum, all plainly designed for the statues of the dog; and some pieces of obelisk, with hieroglyphics almost totally obliterated.

On the 26th, they came to Gooz, a small village, which nevertheless is the capital of Barbar. This village is a collection of miserable hovels composed of clay and canes. There are not in it above thirty houses, but there are six or seven different villages. Here a misfortune happened to Idris their Hybeer, who was arrested for debt, and carried to prison. As they were now upon the very edge of the desert, and to see no other inhabited place till they should reach Egypt, Mr. Bruce was not displeased to have it in his power to lay him under another obligation before they trusted their lives in his hands, which they were immediately to do. Our traveller, therefore, paid his debt, and reconciled him with his creditors, who, on their part, behaved very moderately to him.

Having received all the assurances possible from

## Hassa.

Idris, that he would live and die with them, and after having repeated the prayer of peace, our travellers committed themselves to the desert. There were Ismael the Turk, two Greek servants, besides Georgis, who was almost blind and useless; two Barbarians, who took care of the camels; Idris, and a young man, a relation of his, who joined him at Barbar, to return home; in all nine persons, eight only of whom were effective. They were all well-armed with blunderbusses, swords, pistols, and double-barrelled guns, except Idris and his lad, who had lances, the only arms they could use.

They left Gooz November 9, and set out for the watering-place, which is below a little village called Hassa. All the west side of the Nile is full of villages down to Takaki; but they are all Jahaleen, without government, and perpetually in rebellion. The Nile at Hassa runs at the foot of a mountain called Jibbel Ateshan, or the *Mountain of Thirst*.

Having left Hassa on the 11th, they next day reached Waadi Amour, where they alighted, after they had gone six hours with great diligence. Waadi Amour has a few trees and shrubs, but scarcely enough to afford any shade, or night's provision, for their camels. Being now without fear of the Arabs who live upon the Nile, from which they were at a sufficient distance, they, with the same view to safety, declined approaching the mountains, but held their course nearly N. to a small spot of grass and white sand, called Assa Nagga. Here their misfortunes began, from a circumstance they had not attended to. Their shoes, that had needed constant repair, were become at last absolutely useless, and the hard ground, from the time they had passed Amour, had worn the skin off in several places, so that their feet were very much inflamed by the burning sand.

On the 14th they alighted among some acacia-trees at Waadi el Halboub, having gone twenty-one miles. They were here surprised and terrified by a number

of prodigious moving pillars of sand. In the evening they came to Waadi Dimokea, where they passed the night, much disheartened, and their fear more increased, when they found, upon waking in the morning, that one side was perfectly buried in the sand that the wind had blown above them in the night.

From this day, subordination, though not entirely ceased, was fast on the decline; all was discontent, murmuring, and fear.- Their water was greatly diminished, and that terrible death by thirst began to stare them in the face, and this was owing in a great measure to their own imprudence.

On the 15th, they left Waadi Dimokea, and in the afternoon came to an opening in the ridge of rocks: the passage is about a mile broad, through which they continued till they alighted at the foot of the mountain Del Aned. The place is called Waadi Del Aned.

On the 16th, at eleven o'clock, while they contemplated, with great pleasure, the rugged top of Chiggre, to which they were fast approaching, and where they were to solace themselves with plenty of good water, Idris cried out, with a loud voice, 'Fall upon your faces, for here is the simoom.' Mr. Bruce saw from the S. E. a haze come, in colour like the purple part of the rainbow, but not so compressed or thick. It did not occupy twenty yards in breadth, and was about twelve feet high from the ground. It was a kind of blush upon the air, and it moved very rapidly, for he scarce could turn to fall upon the ground with his head to the northward, when he felt the heat of its current plainly upon his face. They all lay flat on the ground, as if dead, till Idris told them it was blown over. The meteor, or purple haze, which Mr. Bruce saw, was indeed passed, but the light air that still blew was of heat to threaten suffocation.

This phænomenon of the simoom, unexpected by them, though foreseen by Idris, caused them all to relapse into their former despondency. It continued to blow, so as to exhaust them entirely, though the blast was so weak as scarcely would have raised a

## Chiggre.

leaf from the ground. At twenty minutes before five the simoom ceased, and a comfortable and cooling breeze came by starts from the north, blowing five or six minutes at a time, and then falling calm. They were now come to the Acaba, the ascent before they arrived at Chiggre, and at eight alighted in a sandy plain absolutely without herbage, covered with loose stones, a quarter of a mile due north of the well, which is in the narrow gorge, forming the southern outlet of this small plain.

Chiggre is a small narrow valley, closely covered up and surrounded with barren rocks. The wells are ten in number, and the narrow gorge which opens to them is not ten yards broad. The springs, however, are very abundant. Wherever a pit is dug five or six feet deep, it is immediately filled with water. The principal pool is about forty yards square and five feet deep; but the best tasted water was in the cleft of a rock, about thirty yards higher, on the west side of this narrow outlet. All the water, however, was very foul, with a number of animals both aquatic and land.

They left Chiggre, November 17, and on the 18th they passed through a sandy plain, without trees or verdure. At ten o'clock they alighted at a place called Erboygi, where are some trees, to feed their camels. At half past one o'clock they left this, and came to a large wood of broom. Here, for the first time, they saw a shrub which very much resembled Spanish broom. The whole ground is dead sand, with some rocks of reddish granite. In the evening they alighted in a wood, called Terfowey, full of trees and grass. The trees are the tallest and largest they had seen since leaving the Nile.

On the 27th, at half past five in the morning, they attempted to raise their camels by every method that they could devise, but all in vain; only one of them could get upon his legs, and that one did not stand two minutes till he kneeled down and could never be raised afterwards. Every way they turned them-

selves,

---

The palm-trees of Assouan.

---

selves, death now stared them in the face. They had neither time nor strength to waste, nor provisions to support them. They then took the small skins that had contained their water, and filled them as far as they thought a man could carry them with ease; but, after all these shifts, there was not enough to serve them three days, at which he had estimated their journey to Seyene, which still however was uncertain. Finding, therefore, the camels would not rise, they killed two of them, and took so much flesh as might serve for the deficiency of bread; and, from the stomach of each of the camels, got about four gallons of water. The small remains of their miserable stock of black bread and dirty water, the only support they had hitherto lived on amidst the burning sands, and their spirits likewise were exhausted by an uncertainty of their journey's end. They were surrounded among those terrible and unusual phænomena of Nature, which Providence, in mercy to the weakness of his creatures, has concealed far from their sight, in deserts almost inaccessible to them. Nothing but death was before their eyes: All Mr. Bruce's papers, his quadrant, telescopes, and time-keeper, were now to be abandoned to the rude and ignorant hands of robbers, or to be buried in the sands. However, on the 29th, to their inexpressible joy, they saw the palm-trees at Assouan, and a quarter before ten arrived in a grove of palm-trees on the north of that city.

Mr. Bruce was obliged to keep his room five or six days after his arrival; but, as soon as he got better, he and his servants set out on dromedaries, in order to recover his baggage. The Aga had sent four servants belonging to his stables to accompany them; active, lively, and good-humoured fellows. About twelve o'clock, they got into a valley, and hid themselves in the lowest part of it, under a bank, for the night was exceeding cold; Mr. Bruce was afraid, that they had passed his baggage in the dark, as none of them were perfectly sure of the place; but, as soon as

---

Arrival at Marseilles.

---

light came, they recovered their track as fresh and entire as when they made it. After having gone about half an hour in their former footsteps, they had the unspeakable satisfaction to find the quadrant and whole baggage; and by them the bodies of their slaughtered camels, a small part of one of them having been torn by the haddaya, or kite.

Mr. Bruce, after having received a very kind reception at this place, on the 11th of December, set out for Cairo, where he arrived on the 10th of January, 1773. Ali Bey no longer held the sovereign power at Cairo. His son-in-law, Mahomet Bey, had expelled him and usurped his power. Mahomet Bey, when informed of Mr. Bruce's arrival, sent a party, who, with much rudeness and harsh treatment, conducted our traveller into his presence. He received him kindly, permitted him to sit, and ordered him a present of a basket of oranges with a thousand sequins at the bottom. Our countryman refused the money, as he could be supplied by bankers at Cairo to whom he had letters of credit. Mahomet then presented him with a caftan, or robe, in testimony of his kindness, and expressed a wish, that he would ask some other favour. Mr. Bruce represented the inconveniencies and oppressions to which the English trade was subjected at Jidda; and wished Mahomet to permit them to resort to Suez as their mart. He readily obtained a firman to that purpose: and thus performed a very signal service.

After some stay at Cairo he proceeded to Alexandria, where he arrived without any thing material occurring. He here embarked for France; and, after a passage of about three weeks, during which he encountered a violent storm off Derna, where he was once shipwrecked, he at length arrived in safety at Marseilles.

---

FINIS.

---







21





